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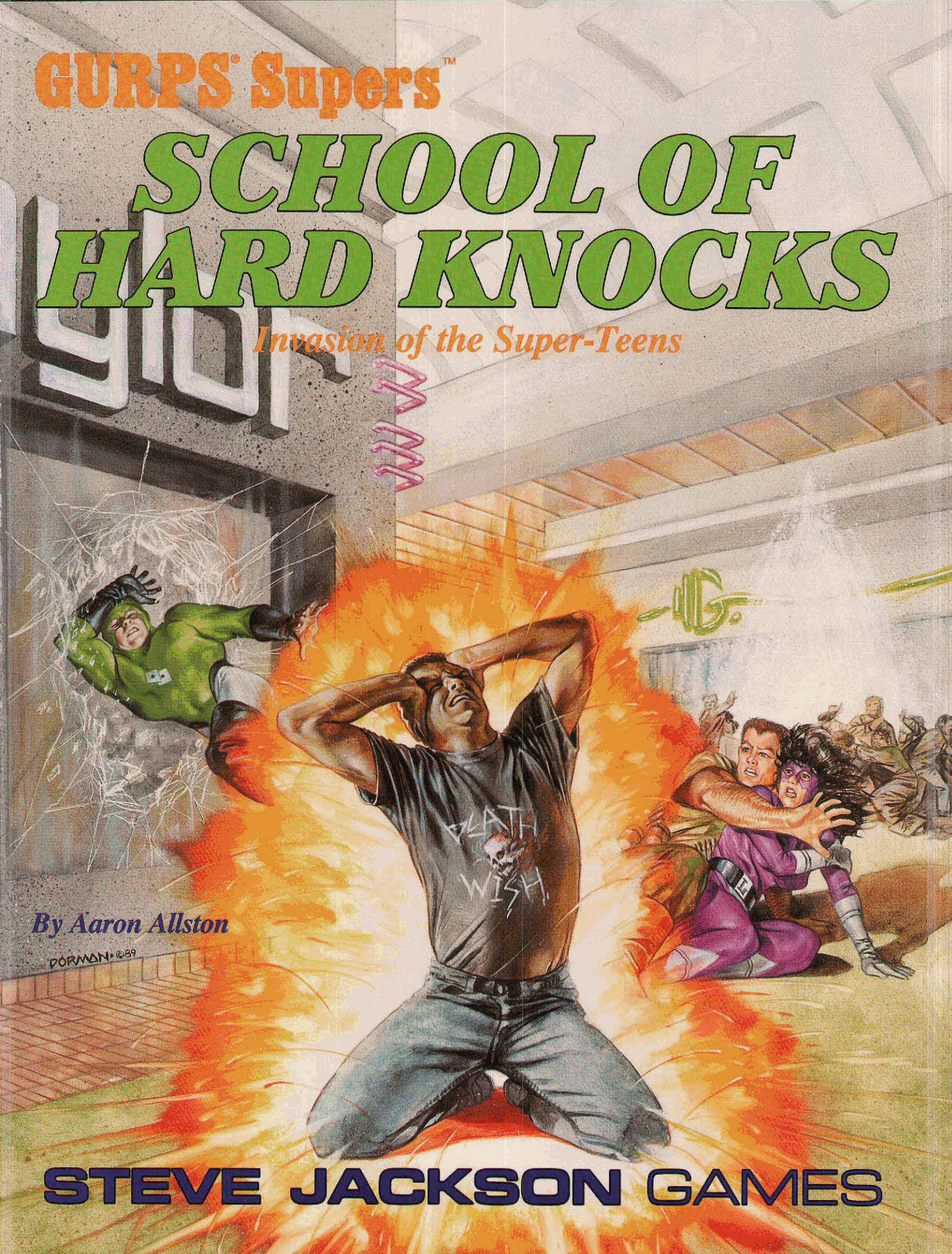
SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

Invasion of the Super-Teens

By Aaron Allston

DORMAN ©89

STEVE JACKSON GAMES



SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

By Aaron Allston

Edited by Loyd Blankenship

Cover Art by David Dorman

Interior Art by Doug Shuler

GURPS System Design by Steve Jackson

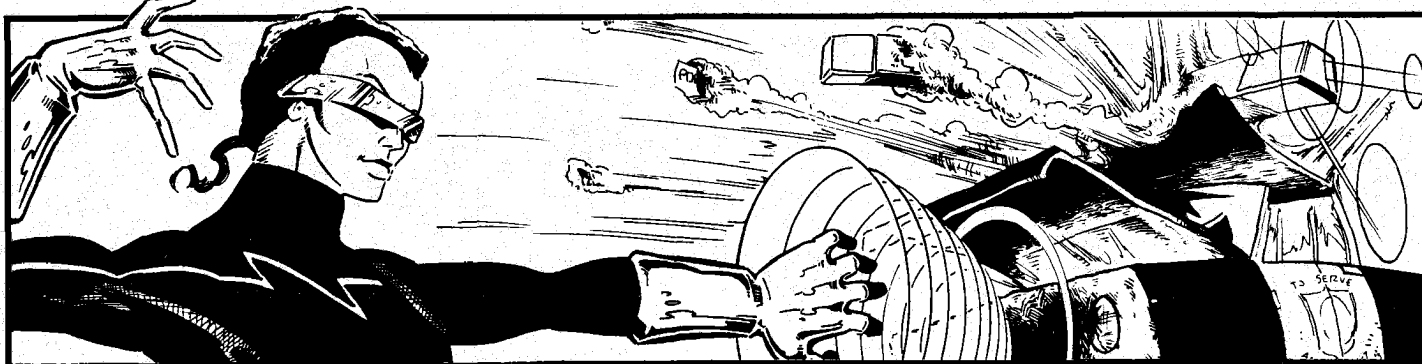
Ken Trobaugh, Managing Editor; Charlie Wiedman, Art Director

Typography and Page Design by Melinda S. Spray and Drew Camard; Proofreading by Carol Stepp

Maps and Graphics by Carl Manz and Charlie Wiedman; Production by Carl Manz and Charlie Wiedman

Playtesters: Kris Andrews, Mark Bennett, Michael Barnes, Brad Binder, Ray Dunn, Lisa Johnson, Denis Loubet, Jan Malone, Chris Nicholas, Luray Richmond, Mark Richmond, Natalia Smith and the Unnamed Crew at Origins '89.

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INTRODUCTION

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

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Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* — e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any reference that begins with a SU refers to *GURPS Supers*.

About The Author

Aaron Allston, a resident of Austin, Texas, is a long-time gamer, gamemaster, and professional freelance writer/game designer. His *GURPS* credits include *GURPS Autoduel* and *Harkwood*. He has also written several supplements for *Car Wars*, and is the (in)famous creator of the *Strike Force* book for the *Champions* game. His current projects include *The Complete Fighter* and *The Complete Priest* for TSR's *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, 2nd Edition.

School of Hard Knocks is a sourcebook and adventure for *GURPS Supers*. The adventure is written for GMs and players who are new to *GURPS Supers* — there's a lot of troubleshooting advice included. The adventure is designed to be played during one to three playing sessions — dependent on how much investigating the heroes do, how many combats they get into, and how many optional events they explore.

School of Hard Knocks is a four-color, comic-book type of adventure, with super-crimefighters and villains who are card-carrying megalomaniacs. Player characters should be built with 500 points each.

School of Hard Knocks doesn't require any specific origin or background for characters. It is designed either to be integrated smoothly into any existing campaign, or to provide a base for a new campaign.

Players: Stop Reading Here!



GM's Introduction

School of Hard Knocks is arranged as follows:

The Adventure: This section describes the course of the entire adventure from start to probable end.

Ifs, Ands or Buts: These are sidebars scattered throughout the adventure, and are used for troubleshooting. They describe ways to fix matters when the players do the unexpected, and the adventure goes off on a mad course that has nothing to do with what's printed in these pages.

The Villains: Character writeups and statistics for all the adventure's NPCs.

Optional Combat Rules

If the campaign is using the optional combat rule of Stun Damage (p. SU86), all damage and attacks will be non-lethal with the following exceptions: Denier will attack to kill unless there is a *very* good reason not to (the victim is a high-ranking government official, or anyone else that would result in a massive, nationwide manhunt if killed), as will Tai. Titan and Drill-Bit *normally* don't attack to kill, but neither of them is the most stable of people. Any time either takes damage in combat they must roll versus IQ. A failed roll means the next attack will be a shoot-to-kill.

Conceivably, there are circumstances where others might begin to make killing attacks — if the PCs indulge in wholesale slaughter, the villains will pull out all the stops in retaliation. These situations are up to the GM to decide.

With all that out of the way, it's time to get your education . . . from the *School of Hard Knocks*.

THE ADVENTURE

School of Hard Knocks can take place just about anywhere the GM wants it to. It presumes that the campaign is set in North America, but a little work on the part of the GM will allow it to be set elsewhere. Throughout this book, the city where the adventure takes place is referred to as the "campaign city."

History

About twenty years ago the Jensik Medical Institute, a major biomedical concern, set up a plant in the campaign city. Jensik hires the best to do its research — dedicated doctors, biologists, pharmacologists, and other experts. The conglomerate, however, has always been run by businessmen to whom profit is the only concern.

Cell 13, the secret "dirty tricks" division of Jensik, uses the corporation's facilities to invent, process and distribute illegal drugs. It dumps medical waste and sabotages competing firms. It researches illegal and unethical drugs and treatments such as genetic engineering, human cloning, chemicals to enhance physical characteristics, pain- and thought-suppressing drugs for the military and other similar projects. Each of Jensik's research facilities has a branch of Cell 13, which the legitimate employees know nothing about (although some long-time employees have noticed occasional unusual events).

The Cell 13 branch in the campaign city spent several years on the *Chrysalis Project*, which was intended to create a nerve gas for purchase by Third World armies. Although initially promising, the project ended in failure. During this time, waste chemicals used in the project were dumped into the river feeding the water supply of the campaign city.

Over the years since *Chrysalis*, many people in the area contracted cancer. Cell 13 never tried to cover these incidents up — they just fabricated evidence which framed other chemical suppliers in the same area. Research went on.

In a very few cases, exposure to these toxins had some decidedly odd effects — especially when pregnant women were exposed. The infant mortality rate in

The World's First Supers

Most campaigns are set in worlds where costumed supers have been running amok for years, and the origins of the characters in this adventure are based on such an arrangement.

Other GMs, however, like to have their players' characters be the very first supers to appear on the gameworld. There's a lot to be said for that approach . . . but if it's chosen, there needs to be some modifications to the characters found here.

The GM will also need to rationalize why *so many* of the world's first supers appear in your campaign city. Just saying "Well . . . it's *New York!*" isn't quite enough. There ought to be a reason.

In *School of Hard Knocks*, the same rationale that led to the creation of most of the adventure's teen supers can be used: The Jensik Medical Institute's dumping toxins into the water supply. It could be that an earlier, similar dumping in another city led to the creation of the PCs . . . and now, ominously, they see the signs of a similar event in the campaign city.

It is even possible that the PCs are classmates of the Forty Thieves at Knox High School! If this is the case, The Denier and the Hell-Raisers might be pursuing the characters as well!

If the above rationale is followed, some modifications made be needed to this adventure's villains. If there are no supernatural elements in the campaign world, for instance, characters such as The Denier and Tai are not actually supernatural — they just look as though they are, and either think they are or like to pretend they are.



Using Cell 13

In addition to providing further adventures for the PCs (see sidebar, p.19), Jensik's Cell 13 can be put to good use by the GM in the course of the adventure.

Investigating the chemical company is the perfect red herring for the gamemaster who wants to keep the players busy over several play sessions. He can send them jetting around the country, interviewing one Jensik official after another — "Oh, Dr. Smith is in Toronto today! You could reach her at our offices there."

Finally, they will become tired of traveling, or realize that they aren't getting anywhere, and return to the campaign city.

The second use of Cell 13 is that of a temporary enemy. If the PCs are a bit too nosy, and the GM wants to keep them on his toes, he can have a hit-squad of Jensik mercenaries spring out of the bushes and open fire on the characters with machine guns. If he *really* wants to give them a surprise, he could design a team of Jensik supers that will try to destroy the character super-team.

the campaign city is very high . . . but some of the affected children have been born not just healthy, but *special*.

Five years ago, the first of these children began developing bizarre physiological abnormalities — thick skin, sharp claws and teeth, and a taste for red meat (with no real scruples as to where he got it). When the SWAT team was through with him, his body was taken to Jensik for a post-mortem. After a good deal of analysis, Cell 13 realized that their own toxin-dumping was responsible for this creature's appearance. Corporate headquarters saw dollar signs . . . and *Project Chrysalis* was reopened.

As time has gone on, more "special" children have appeared. Some have beneficial abilities, others don't. Today, the continuing appearance of these super-teens has the city government frantic with worry, and has several foreign governments and villainous super-teams *very* interested.

A year ago, Flare came to the campaign city (see p. 25). She set up a video arcade, the Sultan's Palace, in a shopping mall near Knox High School. She got to know the normal kids . . . and began looking for the super-kids. She found several, and began training them to be a super-team, the Forty Thieves.

Meanwhile, the Hell-Raisers, a villainous team of demonic disposition, have come to the campaign city on the same sort of errand — to recruit new members for their team. Recently they've begun to suspect that a lot of these super-youths are being drawn into a rival gang, and are planning to break that team up and steal away its choicest members.

To learn more about the NPCs' backgrounds and personalities before taking in the structure of the adventure, read the section titled "The Villains" (see pp. 20-31), then return here.

Episode One: Fire in the Streets

On an otherwise ordinary day in the campaign city, the airwaves are suddenly jammed with reports of a confrontation taking place in the warehouse district. The police report massive explosions, beams of energy, the probable presence of meta-villains, and a lot of confusion.

What's Happening

Flare, with the aid of Psi-Blast, has located a drug distribution operation with a large amount of cash kept at the site. She has organized a strike mission against the operation, intending to blow up the narcotics (in spite of her avowed love of money, she doesn't care for the drug trade) and steal the money.

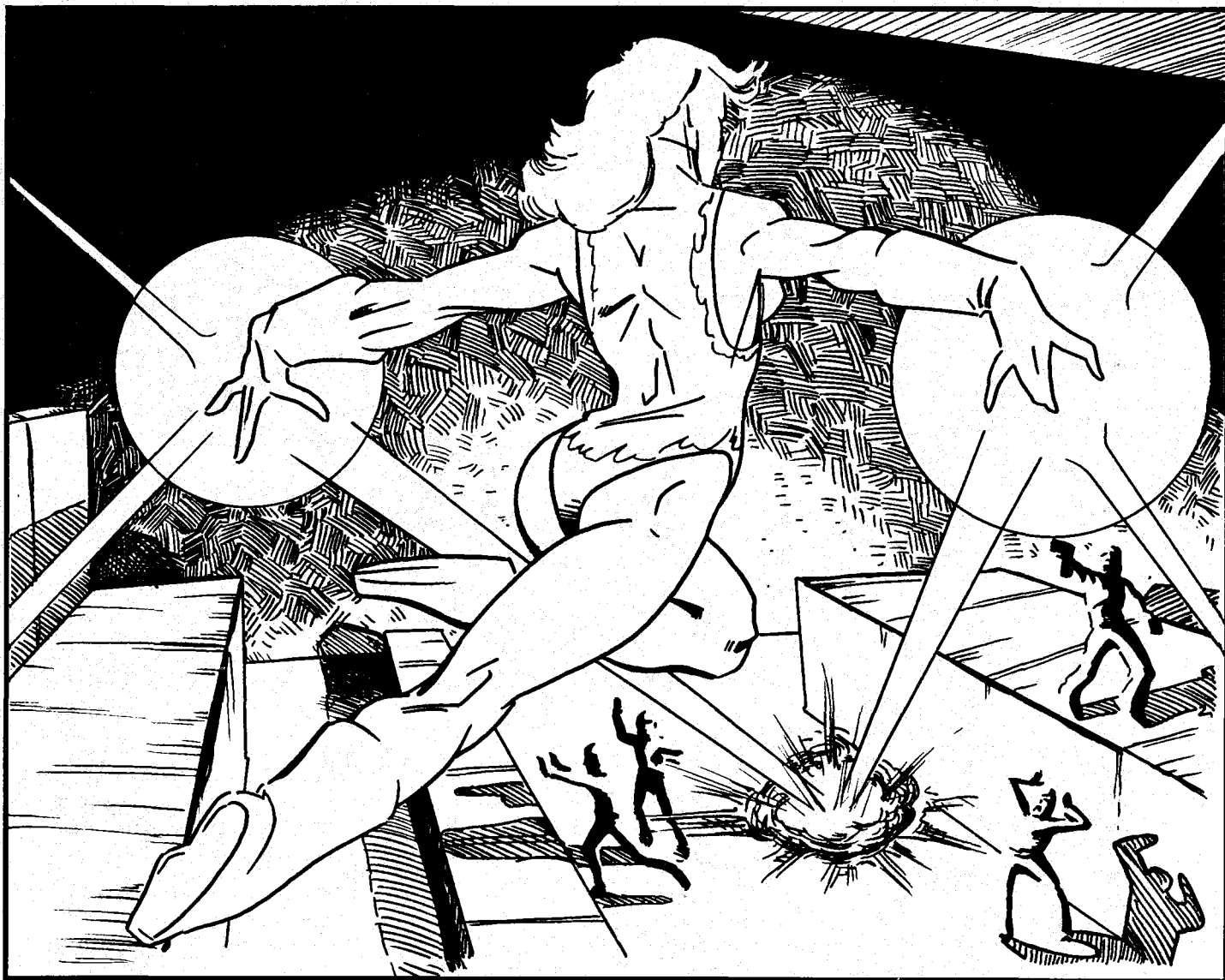
However, while Flare and her Forty Thieves were preparing to go in, Scanner, one of the Hell-Raisers, was busy tracking down the Forty Thieves and caught up to them at the warehouse site. He summoned his teammates, whose goal was to capture one or more of the Forty Thieves and add them to the ranks of the Hell-Raisers — but nothing went right for anyone concerned.

The drug-runners' day was ruined when, as they sat around distributing cargo, counting money and plotting murder, they were attacked by a super-team. The Forty Thieves plowed through the building walls. Flare set about incinerating the warehoused goods while her charges sent the drug-runners running.

The Forty Thieves' day was ruined when the Hell-Raisers came crashing through the walls and attacked. It didn't take long for the Hell-Raisers to begin to overwhelm the Forty Thieves; only Flare and Titan were really a match for any of them.

The Hell-Raisers' day was ruined when the drug-runners reached their assault rifles and got organized. Suddenly the cocaine cowboys were unloading 9mm rounds indiscriminately into attacking supers of both teams.





The situation rapidly deteriorated, with the police showing up. Flare called for an immediate evacuation of the Forty Thieves, who made their escape amidst the smoke and chaos. Disgusted, The Denier ordered the Hell-Raisers to leave, having accomplished nothing — and Mind Master and Briareus, felled by gunfire and the Forty Thieves, didn't make it out of the warehouse. The Denier chose to return to the Hell-Raisers' base and let the straying team members make it home on their own.

It's at this point, mere moments after the Hell-Raisers have left, that the player characters arrive. If they are already a team, they'll probably arrive together. If this is the campaign's first adventure and not all the PCs have met one another, they'll arrive at the same time from different directions, having been alerted to the situation by news reports or the zooming of police cars, SWAT vehicles, and fire trucks.

When the party arrives, there are a half-dozen police cars in position outside, and smoke is billowing out of the warehouse. Trapped, the drug-runners have opened fire on the police, and are chewing the police cars to pieces with automatic-weapons fire; the police are returning fire with shotguns and sidearms. Then there is a mighty roar and a crash as Briareus wakes up inside the warehouse and throws off the burning crates which have fallen on him; he stumbles to the nearest wall and through it, crashing out into the sight of the PCs. He immediately makes a beeline for the police and their cars, whom he recognizes as enemies. It's time for the player characters to act . . .

The Drug-Runners

Stats for the drug-runners at the warehouse are:

ST 12, DX 11, IQ 10, HT 12.

Advantages: Toughness (DR2); Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages: Sadism.

Skills: Guns (Assault Rifles)-15; Guns (Pistols)-13; Knife-14; Fast-Draw (Knife)-14; Throwing Knife-12.

Weapons and Equipment: Each has an Uzi 9mm (see p. B209) with two clips of ammunition, and a Bowie knife.

Ifs, Ands or Buts: The Hell-Raisers Win

It could happen that the PCs get to the warehouse, confront the drug-runners and Briareus and Mind Master, and get beaten by them. What happens then?

This is no problem. Briareus and Mind Master just want to get away, and this episode was designed to introduce the PCs to the idea that the Hell-Raisers and Forty Thieves are around and are at odds with one another, which it successfully accomplishes whether or not the PCs win.

So, when the PCs wake up, they find that Briareus has gotten away clean, but Mind Master was felled by tear gas and the last shots of the cocaine cowboys. He's unconscious and in custody and is going to the hospital.

Another thing to remember, though, is that if Briareus and Mind Master defeated the whole PC team all by themselves, then the villains are too powerful for the PCs. The GM should tone down the power of their attacks across the board, and then see how they operate in *Episode Two*. If they're not as overwhelming in combat as in *Episode One*, things are probably fixed.

Warehouse



Stacks of Crates



Holes



Smoke



Fire

Scale - 1/4" = 2 yards

While the heroes try to keep Briareus from making hash of the assembled police, the drug-runners (three remain, so far unable or unwilling to flee; the rest have escaped or are unconscious) will snipe on the player characters. Only a few turns into the fight, Mind Master, also still inside the warehouse, will wake up and go charging out to help his teammate Briareus.

If the heroes aren't doing well in this combat, the SWAT team will arrive and deploy, putting the lid on the drug-runners inside the warehouse . . . and leaving the heroes to fight Briareus and Mind Master.

Assuming that the heroes win, they'll be standing over the unconscious forms of Briareus and Mind Master while the police take the drug-runners into custody, the warehouse burns, and the fire department arrives.

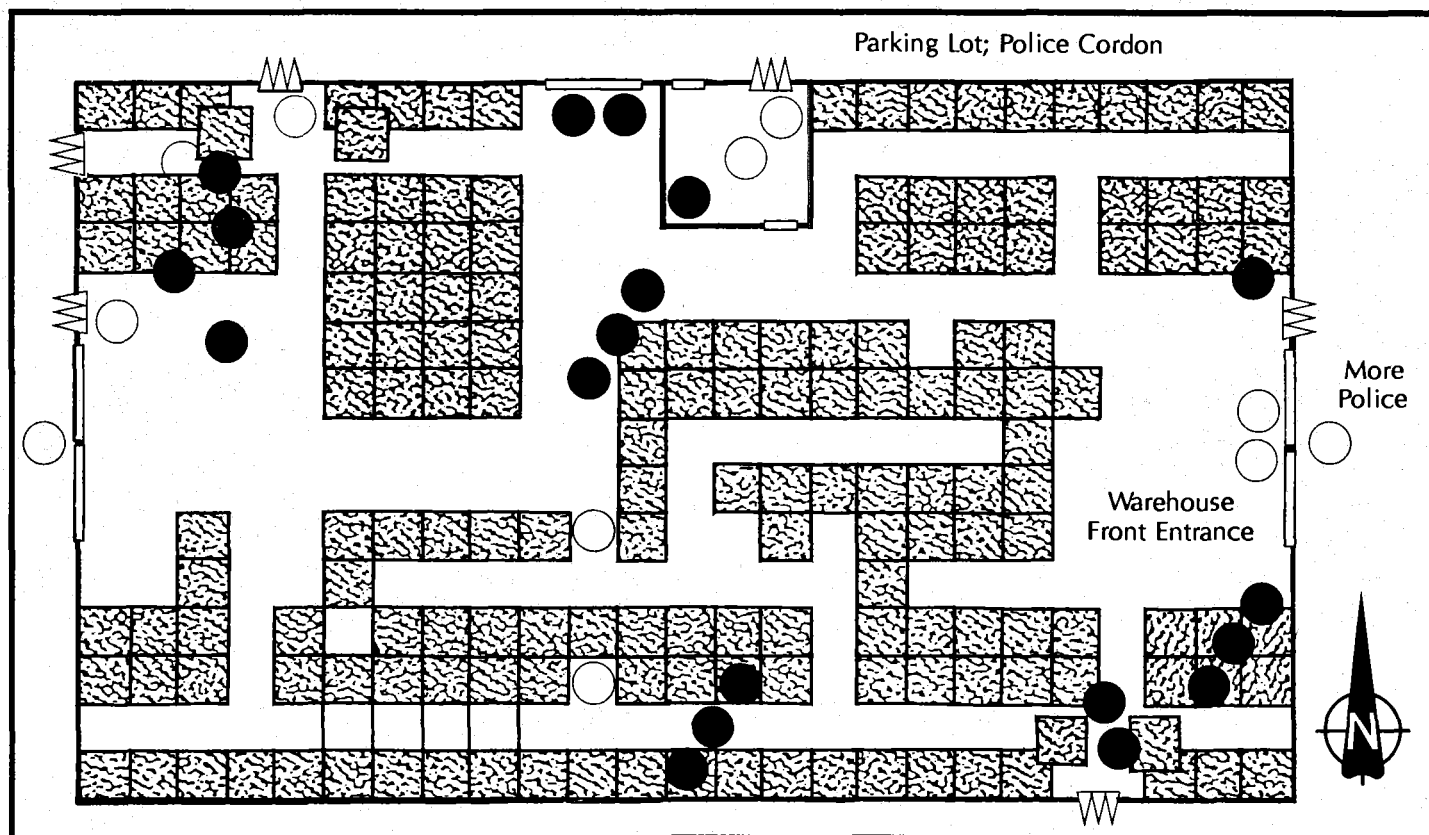
Detective Adam Potter will approach one or more of the PCs and thank them for their help, then ask them to stick around to make statements and try to make some sense out of the situation. When he takes their statements, he'll also give them information on what led up to this commotion — he found witnesses who saw both villainous super-teams attack (and flee) the warehouse.

From their descriptions, he's recognized The Denier and Sizzler, as well as Coldsnap, whom he saw during her incarceration last summer (see p. 29) and Flare (as the woman who rescued Coldsnap). He also knows of Mind Master, who has been arrested in the campaign city before. He knows The Denier, Sizzler and Mind Master by their super-names, Coldsnap only by her real name (Maren McCrae), and Flare only by her description.

If the heroes are a known team, he'll ask how he can get in touch with them; if they're not yet a team, he'll compliment them on their performance and ask if there's any way he can get in touch with them individually if he has any more questions.

He'll also ask the group to accompany him as he follows the ambulance to County General Hospital, where Mind Master and Briareus are being taken.

The press starts to arrive about now, and while the ambulance crews laboriously load Briareus into their vehicle, reporters will be clamoring for the story from the heroes.



Episode Two: All Hell Breaks Loose

Meanwhile, Scanner has returned to the warehouse site to see what there is to see — disguised as a civilian, he's indistinguishable from all the other gawkers at the site. Via his pocket radio, he transmits to The Denier that the police have picked up Briareus and Mind Master, that they're being taken to County General, and that there are super-crimefighters on the site. The Denier decides it's time to retrieve the captured members of his team.

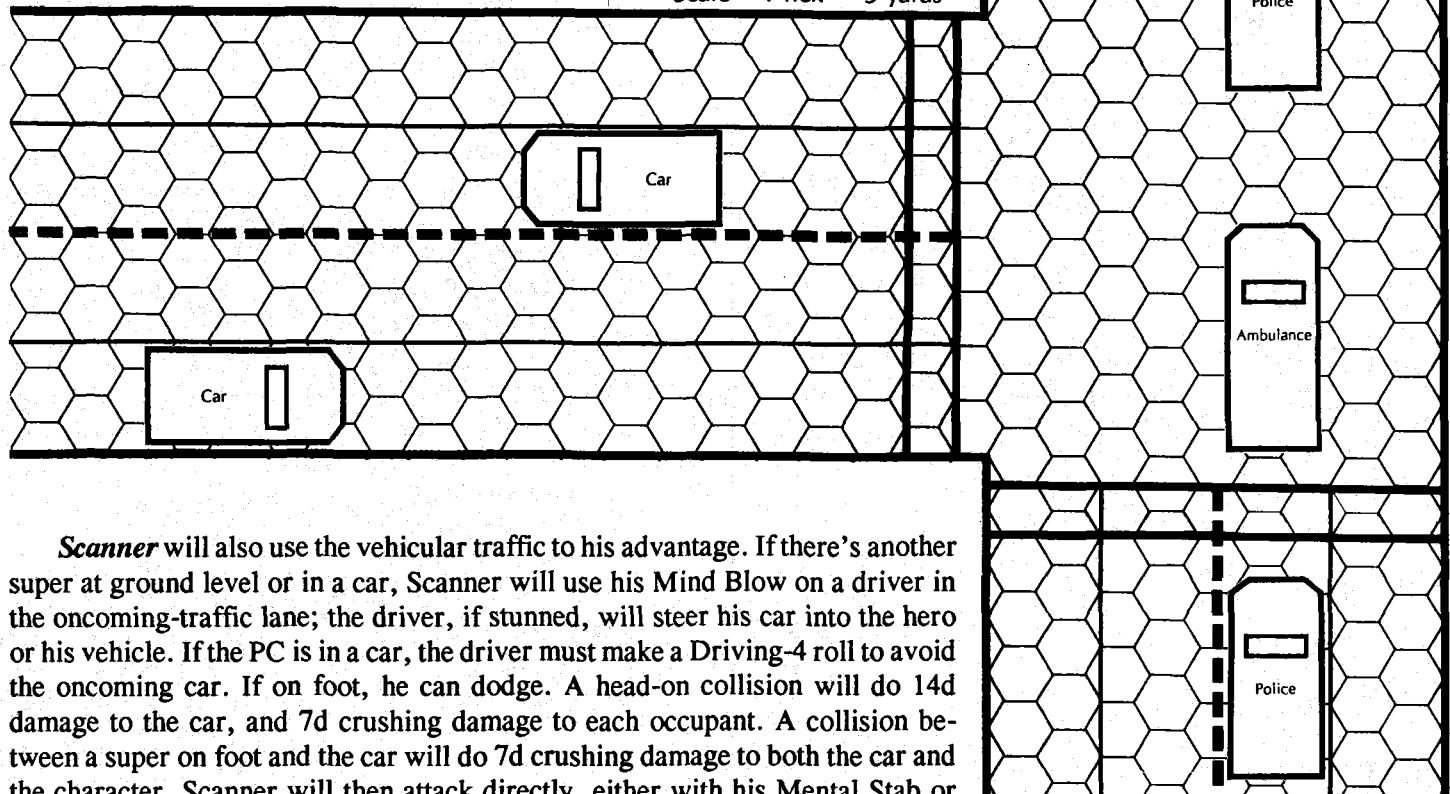
If the heroes accompany the ambulances to the hospital, the Hell-Raisers will attack the convoy en route. At this point, The Denier is thinking only about retrieving his missing teammates, not acquiring new supers, so he's only interested in beating the player characters into unconsciousness and flying off with Briareus and Mind Master.

This is an ambush attack, and it's not meant to be fair. Each member of the Hell-Raisers, lying in wait on the convoy route, will get one free attack against the super of his choice. The GM should use the General Destruction table (sidebar, p. SU80) during this fight, as it's going on in the middle of downtown on a busy street! The attacks will go something like this:

The Denier is in the city sewer, crouched under a manhole cover. When one of the characters passes by, he'll pop out and smash him.

Sizzler will act when The Denier does. If a hero is traveling nearby in a car, she'll blast the vehicle's fuel tank (-6 to hit). If she hits, the character (and anyone else inside) will have 3 turns to get clear of the now-burning car before it explodes. The explosion will do 20d crushing damage to anyone within 2 yards of the car, 5d damage to anyone from 3-5 yards away, and 1d+1 damage to anyone from 5-7 yards away. If no super is near, she'll just blast someone from her position within a crowd of pedestrians; when the fight starts, she'll use the pedestrians as cover.

Scale — 1 hex = 3 yards



Scanner will also use the vehicular traffic to his advantage. If there's another super at ground level or in a car, Scanner will use his Mind Blow on a driver in the oncoming-traffic lane; the driver, if stunned, will steer his car into the hero or his vehicle. If the PC is in a car, the driver must make a Driving-4 roll to avoid the oncoming car. If on foot, he can dodge. A head-on collision will do 14d damage to the car, and 7d crushing damage to each occupant. A collision between a super on foot and the car will do 7d crushing damage to both the car and the character. Scanner will then attack directly, either with his Mental Stab or hand-to-hand (the latter only if his chosen opponent looks weak.)



Dr. Leigh Trammell

Female, age 30, blond hair, green eyes, white, 5' 4", 120 lbs.

ST 10, DX 14, IQ 13, HT 12.

Advantages: Appearance (Attractive).

Disadvantages: Pacifism (cannot kill); Sense of Duty (to Medicine); Stubborn.

Skills: Biochemistry-16; Chemistry-12; First Aid-15; Physician-13; Psychology (Abnormal Psychology)-13; Surgery-13.

Quirks: Clothes horse — wears the current season's most stylish fashions; Wears a lot of jewelry.

Dr. Leigh Trammell will be the physician assigned to oversee the treatment of any heroic supers who were injured and brought to County General.

Trammell grew up in an area afflicted by the Jensik dumping. She saw many of her friends and family members succumb to cancer and leukemia, and her rage at these tragedies eventually led her into a medical career. Though she's only been practicing for five years, she's known statewide as an expert on biochemistry.

She's studied the city's excessive cancer rate and cross-indexed her findings with maps of the city's waterway systems and news files on the chemical producers blamed for chemical dumping. She's gradually come to the suspicion that the actual offender is the Jensik Medical Institute, but doesn't yet have any proof.

It should become obvious to the heroes that Dr. Trammell isn't interested in ferreting out their identities. But she would be quite happy to learn what she can of their abnormal biologies, both to advance her own work and to give them a person to come to when they're injured and ordinary medics can't help.

Briareus will regain consciousness when all the commotion starts. He'll break his restraints, tear through the side of the ambulance and step out into the street, even if the vehicle is still moving; once he stops rolling, he'll attack the nearest good guy.

Drill-Bit will create a sonic wall in the road ahead of oncoming traffic. It's not a wall designed to stop them, though. Shaped like a giant ramp, it will force an oncoming car to launch itself through the air into a flying super or into the car or vehicle of a ground-based super for 8d damage. When that's done, she'll attack the PC, softening him up with a couple of Sonic Blasts before engaging him in hand-to-hand combat.

Mind Master, too, will wake up. He'll force his driver to stop (with Telecontrol), then sit inside the ambulance and use his illusions to trick the super-team into blasting one another. His tactic here is to make one super see another as The Denier or one of the Hell-Raisers.

Tai is at a disadvantage — many of his powers aren't working in this daytime situation. He'll be on a nearby rooftop sniping at the heroes until he runs out of ammo, then he'll leave, regardless of whether the fight is over or not.

If all goes as The Denier expects, he and his team will leave the PC heroes unconscious and injured, then fly off with Briareus and Mind Master. (If something goes wrong and the heroes prevail, see the sidebars on pp. 9 and 10.)

Episode Three: Investigation

Assuming that they were beaten, the PCs will revive. If anyone was actually injured, he'll be taken to County General. Numerous civilians, police and bypasser drivers were injured in the altercation and have also been taken to the hospital. At this point, they are aware that there's a villainous super-team in the campaign city, and that it's time for some investigating.

After they have left the hospital, Detective Potter will get in touch with the PCs in order to give them some information — in the hopes that they'll follow up on it, as he is doing. He talks about three things:

Flare and Coldsnap

Potter has been aware for some time that a glowing female super has been preying on local criminals, destroying their operations and taking their money for herself. He's sure that the leader of the first super-team is that woman, and witnesses near the warehouse fight heard her called "Flare." He also knows the identity of one of Flare's confederates, a young woman named Maren McCrae. He describes how McCrae was broken out of jail by Flare (see p. 29).

At the warehouse fight, McCrae was addressed as "Coldsnap" by her teammates, according to witnesses. The fact that Flare shows up leading a group of supers, most or all of whom are teens (it's impossible to tell with Titan and Metal, but the others were teen-aged) gained Potter's interest, and he hopes the supers can pursue avenues of investigation not open to the police.

The Denier and Sizzler

If the supers don't have access to intercity communication with other super-groups, and haven't yet researched their enemies, Potter will have some information on The Denier's group, as well. Potter hadn't known it before, but The Denier, a well-known villain, is now working with a team, the Hell-Raisers, whose members include Sizzler, Scanner, Briareus, Mind Master, and a woman wearing the costume of the late bank robber Man-Drill (see pp. 22-23). The Hell-Raisers have been operating in another large city (the GM should choose a nearby metropolis) but have now relocated to the campaign city; Potter doesn't know why.

The Walking Time-Bomb

Potter has one last bit of very important new information. A super-being is traveling across the U.S. in the direction of the campaign city. (The GM must choose the names of the cities involved in Potter's explanation of events.)

Two days ago, in a U.S. city quite distant from the campaign city, a bus terminal blew up. Survivors said that a young man had just bought a bus ticket and was leaving the clerk's desk when he suddenly began screaming for everyone to get away from him — and then he "blew up," sending searing energy in all directions without himself being hurt.

While people burned and died, he ran from the terminal and was not seen again. He'd bought a ticket to the campaign city just before blowing up. He's described as a young man, age 15 or 16, wearing blue jeans, a blue jeans jacket, a rock n' roll T-shirt and tennis shoes.

Yesterday, in a city several hundred miles closer to the campaign city, a young man matching his description jumped out of a slow-moving tractor-trailer rig and blew up on a city street, causing numerous accidents and one fatality. The truck's driver told police that he'd picked up a hitchhiker (whose description matched that of the bus-terminal visitor). After this street accident, the youth disappeared again.

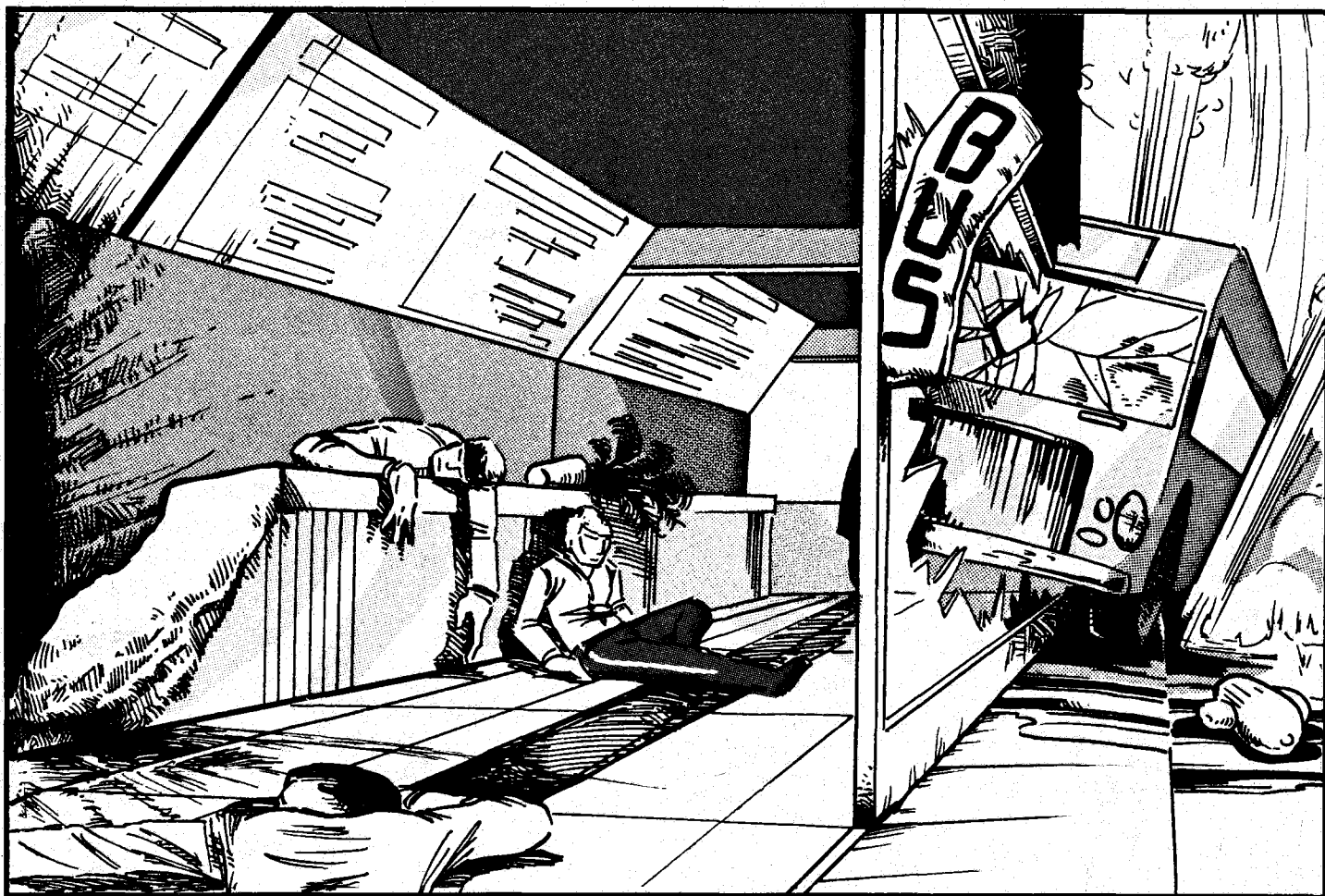
This morning, not far distant from the campaign city, a train was derailed when an empty boxcar exploded. The train conductor's description of the explosion precisely matched that of the previous explosions, though the young man was not seen.

The trend should be fairly obvious, even to the most inattentive players — if a line plotting the sightings of the "exploding man" was drawn on a map, it would form an arrow pointing straight at the campaign city!

Ifs, Ands or Buts: The PCs Leave

Perhaps the PCs don't hang around after the fight is done. This prevents Detective Potter from talking to them, and keeps them from accompanying the ambulance convoy to County General.

The purpose of *Episode Two* is to give the PCs a taste of combat with the Hell-Raisers, and to give them a reason to hate that team — being beaten by them. If the heroes don't go, they're not beaten . . . but the convoy is attacked and its police and hospital workers are slaughtered almost to the last man (Potter still lives). It's graphic evidence that the PCs could have saved some lives had they agreed to Potter's request, and may make them feel guilty about not staying around the crime scene.





Ifs, Ands or Buts: What if the PCs Win?

It could be that the PCs annihilate the Hell-Raisers in *Episode Two*. This presents two problems.

First, it means that the Hell-Raisers are underpowered to deal with the heroes.

Second, the Hell-Raisers are going to prison and will have a hard time participating in the rest of the adventure.

The GM can fix both problems by bringing the Denier's demonic patron into the situation. As the Hell-Raisers are being loaded into their cells, all present hear a horrid, gargling voice: "Denier, my wretch of a servant, you have failed me . . . It is time for you and your sluglike allies to return to me and accept my punishment. I shall give you the power to deal with these meddling mortals — but first, you must suffer . . ."

With that pronouncement, the Hell-Raisers are teleported to the Patron's hell, where their powers are mystically increased.

This gives the GM an excuse to throw some more points into the Hell-Raisers' character sheets and make them a match for the PCs. When the two teams next meet, things should be more even. And with the Hell-Raisers free again, things can proceed to *Episode Three*.

Ifs, Ands or Buts: The PCs Don't Investigate

What if the heroes don't conduct *any* investigations? Perhaps they're all combat monsters with no interest in tracking down clues or talking to NPCs.

Well, that's unfortunate, but the GM will have to deal with it. This is another use for Detective Potter; have him track down the PCs and dump in their laps all the facts which the PCs could have discovered for themselves.

Once the PCs are in possession of all this information, Flare can get in touch with them and propel them into *Episode Four*.

The Party's Investigations

The PCs have many avenues of investigation open to them — here are some of the most likely, and what the characters will find when pursuing them:

Road Trip

The heroes, learning that The Denier and the Hell-Raisers come from another city, may travel there to find out what they can about the villain team. This avenue of investigation shouldn't take too long — there's very little to find. If there is an established super-team in that city, the PCs will encounter them; otherwise, their investigations will lead them to the city police.

Local heroes know the Hell-Raisers, all right. They can give costume descriptions and some descriptions of powers (what they look like and how they manifest, not how much damage they do) for all members of the Hell-Raisers. These heroes have fought the Hell-Raisers on a couple of occasions and say that there is no *local* reason for the Hell-Raisers to have left town — the heroes haven't yet been able to catch them or chase them off. No clue from their previous encounters would indicate why they left.

If there are no local super-crimefighters, the police have had it even worse. The Hell-Raisers walked all over them from the day they arrived, and nothing has been able to stop them.

To sum it up, local supers or police will be able to tell the characters that there was nothing in this city that prompted the Hell-Raisers to leave. There must be something in the campaign city that they *want*.

Sightings of Teen Supers

Diligent searching of news files and interviews with police and witnesses will reveal lots of interesting and previously-unconnected information.

In the early summer, a young man in an overcoat and sunglasses used sonic powers to shatter the main window of a local bank, setting off alarms. Police chased him down a blind alley, but when they got to the end he was gone. One police officer now claims that he thought he caught a glimpse of a glowing woman flying off with the perpetrator . . . but he wasn't sure then, and didn't report it at the time. (The young man was Metal, the woman, Flare; see p. 28.)

Earlier in the year, there was a series of armored-car robberies. The perpetrator was invisible and very strong. He literally knocked over the armored cars, pulled them open, and took their cargo. When he spoke, it seemed his voice was being broadcast over a loudspeaker, and it cracked like a teen-ager's. The crime-wave came to an abrupt halt — at the last theft, a costumed woman (whose description matches that of Flare) was seen leaving the site.

The story of Maren McCrae/Coldsnap also belongs in the category of teen supers (see p. 29). The heroes may have already heard about it from Potter. If they investigate the McCrae family, they'll find that the parents are belligerent fundamentalists who believe that their daughter has given herself to Satan — they want nothing more to do with her.

However, they do have one very interesting piece of news for the heroes (and, if the heroes don't visit them, the parents will report it to Detective Potter, who will report it to the heroes): A young black man was by earlier that day looking for Maren, too. He was 15 or 16 years old, nervous, wearing a jeans jacket and blue jeans and some sort of printed T-shirt, all looking and smelling as though he'd slept in them a few days. When he learned that Maren no longer lived here, he left quickly.



The GM should continue to provide information from the character stories until the PCs, either through their own reasoning or through the use of detective-type skills, come to the conclusion that (a) there are a lot of teen supers suddenly appearing in the campaign city, and (b) one person — matching the description of Flare, who participated in the warehouse attack earlier in the adventure — has been seen with quite a few of them. The logical conclusion is that she's putting together a super-team of teens. If the PCs aren't able to put this together, the GM should have Detective Potter do so.

Sightings of The Hell-Raisers

Sightings of the Hell-Raisers have only begun very recently. When the heroes begin putting together the police reports and news reports on these sightings, they'll discover that the Hell-Raisers have been visiting sites where Flare and her team had earlier been sighted.

The conclusion for the PCs? The Denier and his Hell-Raisers are also looking for Flare and her team.

Statistics On Super Appearances

Looking at the number of metahumans appearing in the campaign city, it will become obvious that the city is generating more supers than elsewhere in the nation. It could be, in fact, that some of the player-characters' powers have resulted from the same source as the members of the Forty Thieves, so the PCs may be surprised to find some of their own members among these statistics.

Dr. Trammell, the PCs will find, is an expert on biochemistry. If they ask her about this subject, she'll give them part of her pet theory about the situation; she believes that chemical dumping which began between 15 and 20 years ago is responsible, and that there may be a lot more teen supers out there. She won't yet discuss her growing impression that Jensik is the perpetrator; she's not sure.

Trying to Communicate with Flare

If the PCs try to get in touch with Flare or the Forty Thieves, by whatever means, the GM should go on to *Episode Four* (substituting the heroes' getting in touch with Flare for Flare's getting in touch with the heroes).

The Jensik Medical Institute

Dr. Trammell isn't yet ready to voice her suspicions of the Jensik Medical Institute. The PCs, however, might figure out that she's concealing something, or they may come, independently, to the conclusion that Jensik is somehow involved.

In this case, let them do some investigations into Jensik . . . it won't help solve the riddle of the teen-supers, but it could lead down several interesting paths.

The Jensik Medical Institute was founded 1952 by millionaire businessman Oslo Jensik, who was dying of cancer. Jensik knew it was too late for him, but wanted to leave a legacy behind, one which might find cures for others in the future.

Jensik, a hard-line businessman and outspoken opponent of government intervention, felt that only private enterprise could keep the medical field prosperous and profitable (and therefore still in business); consequently his namesake institute was to develop medical treatments and be very aggressive in their promotion and marketing.

The Jensik Medical Institute corporate officers eagerly adopted his business strategies . . . so much so that it has branched out into a wide variety of interesting and illegal areas.

The PCs' investigation will reveal the following:

(1) The Jensik Medical Institute is a medical and pharmacological corporation with stock traded on the NYSE and other exchanges. The stock is a solid, steady performer. Corporate offices are in Manhattan, with major branches (those including research facilities) in Boston, Washington DC, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas, Chicago, Paris, Rome, Manila, and (if it's not already in this list) the campaign city.

(2) JMI's corporate marketing strategy is well-known. The corporation is disliked by anyone having reason to oppose its elitist approach and lack of generosity, especially health-insurance activists. On the other hand, the American Medical Association has no cause for complaint against JMI; the Food and Drug Administration has had no unusual complaints against the corporation.

(3) The corporation does not have a history of super or criminal events surrounding it, but there have been a few unusual incidents. The Los Angeles research center burned down inexplicably two years ago; the LAPD believes that a bomb was detonated in the basement, but JMI denies that it received terrorist threats or other forewarning before the bombing. (See the writeup for Flare in the Villains chapter.)

Continued on next page . . .

Episode Four: Chaos Cubed

Flare is now aware that the hero team is on her trail. She decides to communicate with the group and try to work out a truce. She's also aware, from news reports, that the "exploding man" is on his way to the campaign city. She wants to get in touch with him to persuade him to join her.

She and the Forty Thieves spend all day making preparations and plans. Flare, Psi-Blast and Metal search for the "exploding man." Titan, Poltergeist and Dreamer prepare the meeting site so that the Forty Thieves can make a quick getaway if the characters turn out to be treacherous, and Coldsnap stays back at Forty Thieves HQ (The Sultan's Palace) to coordinate the groups.

During the day, the local police spot the exploding man (Jay-Ray Robinson) and set out after him. Metal, monitoring their radio traffic, alerts Flare, who swoops down on Jay-Ray and carries him off. If the supers were doing the same thing, Flare was closer and got there and escaped just before the heroes arrived. Regardless, police witnessing the event do get a good look at Flare, so Detective Potter soon knows what has happened and will relay that information to the group.

The Meeting

If the super-team has already tried to get in touch with Flare, she'll contact them through the same means. If they haven't, she'll contact them through whatever means is most logical to the GM.

Her offer? If the PCs will promise not to capture or detain them, she and the Forty Thieves will meet the heroes at a time and place of her choosing. She says she just wants to talk, to iron out subjects of mutual interest and to make sure that there's no confusion between the two teams.

If they accept, she says she'll communicate again later in the day to set the place and time. At nightfall, she will do so. The appointment is for the North Atrium of Knox High School, in ten minutes. She explains that if the characters approach Knox from the air, there are two long areas in the building that are open to the air; obviously, the North Atrium is the more northerly of the two.

It won't affect matters if the supers show up early; Flare will still beat them there (she called from the school). If they show up late, skip on to *Episode Five: Heavy Metal*; the heroes will arrive in time to find the Forty Thieves in the early stages of a hopeless battle with the Hell-Raisers.

Assuming that the characters do go there on time or a little early, they'll find Flare and the Forty Thieves, Jay-Ray Robinson (matching the description of the "exploding man") and Flare. She introduces Jay-Ray as Plasma, the latest addition to the Forty Thieves.

What else will the two teams talk about? That's up to the players. Flare just wants to see who the heroes are and try to convince them not to bother with the Forty Thieves.

Dissenting Opinions

If the PCs challenge Flare on the subject of leading these juveniles into a life of crime, she'll become defensive, describing the lives that these kids would have had had she left them alone. She will also make the claim that her attacks on local organized crime figures are helping the community.

The heroes might appeal to the Forty Thieves to persuade them to leave Flare, or to seek professional help, perhaps from the super-team or other well-known heroic supers. If the characters are persuasive, they'll see some confusion and doubt arise in the Forty Thieves. Plasma, especially, will speak out on this matter. "Maybe they can keep me from blowing up and killing everybody," he pleads with Flare. "Every time it happens, it's worse and worse . . ."



The Jensik Medical Institute (continued)

(4) The local branch of Jensik is operated by Vice President Leyland Avery, who is a hard-nosed, ill-tempered businessman; Avery is stingy, disinterested in the medical welfare of man unless man is willing and able to pay for it, disinterested in talking to costumed supers or investigators, and disinterested in answering questions or allegations.

The most aggravating thing about Avery is that he's clean; he doesn't know about Cell 13, so he's the perfect stooge and red herring for super investigators.

(5) Avery's right-hand person is Helena Correll, division head in charge of general operations. She keeps the local facility moving, manages various projects, deals with the press (and nosy supers) in Avery's name, and so forth. She's intelligent, ambitious and beautiful. She'll be quick and efficient in answering as many super-team questions as she can, but with most sensitive questions must apologetically say "I'm sorry, Mr. Avery has to authorize me to give you that information . . ."

Unfortunately, she's also the head of Cell 13 in this city, and will be acting as helpfully as possible, and even showing personal interest in a hero, in order to gain the characters' confidence and thwart or betray them.

It's at that point that a new voice insinuates itself in the argument. "As long as we're having peaceful discourse and offering opinions on right and wrong," intrudes a silky voice, "I'd like to put in my own two cents' worth." The intruder is The Denier, who has silently flown to the rooftop near the two teams; he carries a small white flag of truce and wears a mocking grin.

The Denier doesn't attack. Neither do the Forty Thieves. If the PCs attack, The Denier will try to calm things down, at least initially; he really *does* want to talk to the Forty Thieves. If the PCs won't call off the attack, The Denier will call in his Hell-Raisers and the inevitable fight will begin now; and even while they fight, he'll do his best to win the Forty Thieves over to his way of thinking.

If left to speak for a moment, he'll tell the Forty Thieves, "Before you decide to ally yourself with these prancing do-gooders, allow me to offer a dissenting opinion. Some of you know, deep in your hearts, that the powers that be have given us these miraculous abilities so that we may do exactly as we please, whenever we please, suffering no insult, brooking no obstacle."

"I have some of the greatest scientific minds in the world working for me" (a patent lie) "and can provide you greater understanding of your powers and problems than this showgirl you call your leader. Jay-Ray — I'm sure we could teach you to control your powers! And these so-called heroes want you to join them so that you, too, can offer yourselves as slaves to morality and a tradition of centuries of unjust laws and mediocre government. Join me, and you will master not only yourselves but the world around you!"

His speech will go on in this vein until somebody puts an end to it. He's very persuasive and some of the Forty Thieves will tend to believe what he's saying — Jay-Ray and Coldsnap are so desperate for a cure that they'll listen seriously to *anyone* promising to help them!

Eventually, someone will throw the first punch. If it's not a PC anxious to shut up his convincing tirade, it will be Flare with the same end in mind. Chaos will erupt as The Denier calls in his own troops, the Hell-Raisers. Suddenly there is a two-way fight between the PCs and the arriving Hell-Raisers, with Flare ordering her Forty Thieves out of the fight.

Ifs, Ands or Buts: The Heroes Don't Go

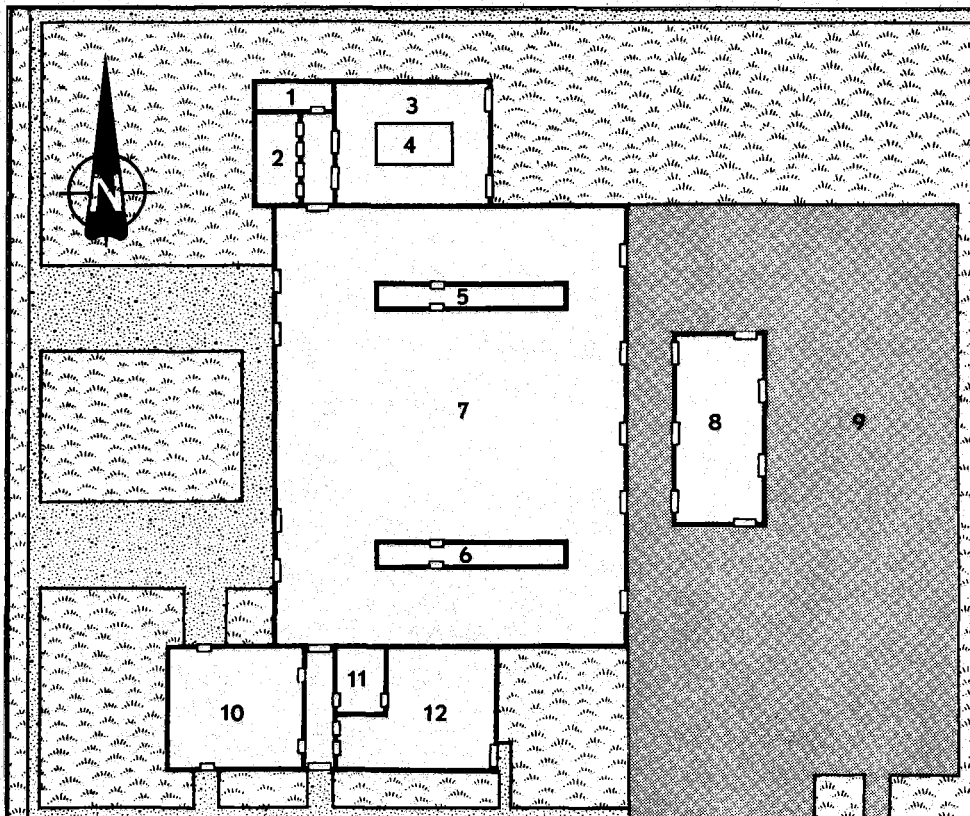
If the heroes decide not to meet with Flare, it's obvious that the adventure can't be played as written.

What happens next, off-screen, is that Flare and the Forty Thieves are ambushed and scattered by the Hell-Raisers. Titan, Poltergeist, and Plasma (who is hoping to be cured) join the Hell-Raisers — the rest scatter. Flare is kind enough to notify the PCs that the Hell-Raisers are now a larger and more powerful group and have decided to wipe out the PCs.

The next episode is the Hell-Raisers' assault on the player characters' HQ.

If the PCs win, the Hell-Raisers wake up in jail. If the PCs lose, they probably don't wake up.

Needless to say, the GM should encourage his players to meet with Flare.



Knox High School (Exterior)

- 1 Dressing Room
- 2 Band
- 3 Gym
- 4 Court
- 5 North Atrium
- 6 South Atrium
- 7 Main Building
- 8 Vocational
- 9 Staff Parking
- 10 Auditorium
- 11 Library
- 12 Cafeteria

- Grass
- Sidewalk

Doors For Location Only
 = Single Door (3 ft.)
 = Double Door (6 ft.)
 Scale — 1/8" = 8 yards

Episode Five: Heavy Metal

The fight breaks out — the Hell-Raisers versus the party. The Denier continues his persuasive haranguing of the Forty Thieves for a few turns, then gets involved in the fight. Flare orders her charges to escape, but they mill around for a few turns, ducking behind cover and exchanging quick words.

To see how the Forty Thieves align themselves, see the sidebar.

As the fight begins to get under way, Titan will jump into the fray, shouting at his former mentor “Sorry, Flare, batwings makes sense!” Then he opens fire on one of the player-characters.

Whereupon Metal will jump into the fray, shouting at Titan “You always were some sort of super-genius-level moron!” then going after one of the Hell-Raisers, coming to the assistance of the PCs.

The GM should run this fight in as mobile and action-packed a manner as possible. Supers should be flying all over the halls, crashing through walls, hitting one another with desks, racks of library books, and so forth.

The heroes and villains should spread out all over the school as the fight continues. The GM should contrive to arrange this even if the heroes are inclined to stick to one area. Villains will fly all over the place, hoping to get at heroes from the back. Heroes and villains alike will be knocked through walls, and Flare’s new system of escape tunnels can come into play (see sidebar).

The Forty Thieves allied with the characters will attack the Hell-Raisers (but not Flare or the other Forty Thieves). The Forty Thieves allied with the Hell-Raisers will attack the PCs (but not Flare or the other Forty Thieves).

The young supers still allied with Flare will stick beside her as she spends some fruitless time trying to get the situation back under control; then she, and whichever supers are still with her, will use one of the escape routes (see sidebar) and get away.

This leaves the PCs and their new allies slugging it out with the Hell-Raisers and their new allies. Conduct this fight to its natural conclusion. The resolution of the fight is up to the PCs.

Whatever happens, the GM should arrange matters so that the following things take place:

(1) Metal is kayoed in the fight and kidnapped by one of the Hell-Raisers; the PCs should see this but be unable to prevent it. (The Denier can teleport him away, if necessary.)

(2) The Denier should get away. This won’t be hard to arrange; after all, he can always vanish to some hellish plane and return to Earth later.

The most likely result of the fight is that elements of the Hell-Raisers and PCs get away; it’s quite possible that members of each team will be captured by members of the other team. At the end of the fight, Knox High School is a mess, some or all of the Hell-Raisers are at liberty, and some or all of the PCs are at liberty.

Freeing the Captives

Metal and any captured good guys will be taken back to Hell-Raisers HQ. Metal, and possibly one or more of the PCs, will be awake while The Denier discusses plans with his team and its new members. Then, The Denier and most or all of his remaining team will leave.

There are several different ways the heroes can get to the next stage of the adventure, all of which involve the party and Metal getting together again. They include:

(1) *Searching For the Captives* — If the free PCs are looking for their captured teammates and/or Metal, they should have little difficulty in finding them. Detecting gadgets attuned to the powers of their teammates or Metal,



Flare’s Escape Plans

Preparatory to meeting the PCs, Flare has sent Dreamer, Poltergeist and Titan on to the school and had them put in lots of escape avenues for the Forty Thieves — just in case the PCs are treacherous or something goes wrong. Titan has dug a series of escape tunnels from the North Atrium, being careful to bypass water conduits and power cables, while Dreamer has transformed several lockers and ceiling tiles into secret exits.

When a member of the Forty Thieves falls or is trapped, the GM can assume it is near one of these escape routes.

The Forty Thieves Choose Up Sides

At this point the GM needs to calculate what effect all this speechmaking has had on the youthful Forty Thieves. There are two sets of alternatives:

The PCs Were Persuasive

If the PCs were persuasive and effective in their speechmaking, the Forty Thieves align themselves in this manner:

Psi-Blast and Dreamer with Flare;

Titan with The Denier;

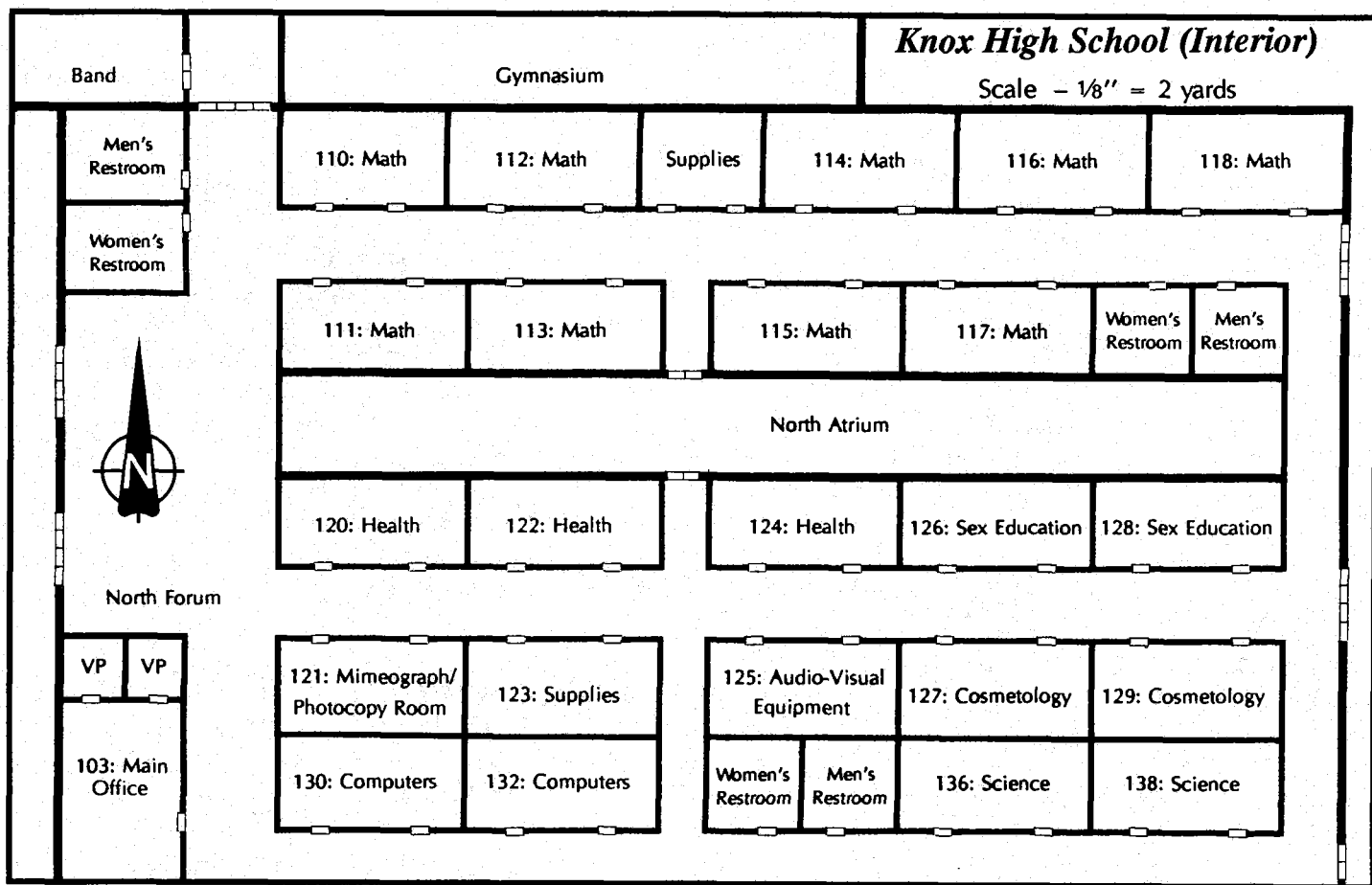
Plasma, Metal and Coldsnap with the PCs.

The PCs Were Not Persuasive

If the Denier made his smooth speech but the PCs were unconvincing or bad speech-makers, the Forty Thieves align themselves as follows:

Psi-Blast and Metal will stick by Flare;

Plasma and Coldsnap (lured by the promise of medical help) plus Titan and Dreamer (for purely mercenary reasons) with The Denier.



questioning of Mind Master or Drill-Bit (if either was captured), or mental scanning powers could all be successful in tracking down the Hell-Raisers' HQ. When the PCs get there, the captives are being held by six Hell-Raisers agents (three male, three female. See sidebars, pp. 17-18) who must be overpowered, but the captives are otherwise unhurt.

(2) Escape — If PCs were captured along with Metal, and the players are looking for another fight, have all the captured characters wake up in chains in a secure cell in the basement of The Denier's home. They must use their brains and skills to escape, and when they do they must overpower the abovementioned Hell-Raisers agents. Once that's done, they can radio and rejoin their teammates.

(3) Metal Breaks Free — If Metal was the only super caught by the Hell-Raisers, he'll have been left in the care of two Hell-Raisers agents, stripped of his armor, and put in shackles. When he awakens, he'll use his Disintegration powers to free himself, easily overpower the agents with his other powers, and then use whatever means he can, including just telephoning the police, to get in touch with the PCs. He overheard The Denier's plans, and no longer thinks Flare capable of preventing the upcoming tragedy, so he turns to them.

The Denier's Plans

The Denier got the secret of Flare's identity and the location of her HQ from Titan (or any of the other Forty Thieves that may have defected). His plan is to go to Ridgcrest Mall, where the Sultan's Palace (Flare's HQ) is, eliminate her, and capture any remaining Forty Thieves who eluded him before. The Denier confided this only to the Hell-Raisers, but Metal overheard the discussion with his acute hearing.

Metal knows that it will take some time for The Denier to get to the mall. Titan insisted that they go by his home first so he can repair the Titan suit (if



Ifs, Ands or Buts: The Hell-Raisers Are Beaten

If, in Episode Five, the Hell-Raisers are completely beaten, it's time to dust off The Denier's demon-master again, (as described, in "What If the PCs Win?" (sidebar, p. 10). This time, the Patron will growl "This is your last chance! Fail me again and I shall drink your souls and revel!"

The patron will up-power the Hell-Raisers as described earlier, and then transport them and their captives back to The Denier's mansion. He meant his threat about this being Denier's last chance; he will not intervene again . . .



Ifs, Ands or Buts: The Denier's Home

No map is provided for The Denier's home, which doubles as Hell-Raisers' HQ, because it is very unlikely that the characters will end up out there.

In the unlikely event the PCs are taken to (or find) the place, the GM should work up a large mansion on the town's outskirts. It's big, old, and moldy. Most of it is in decent repair but some wings are falling apart. It's dark, with banging shutters, and looks positively spooky when silhouetted by lightning — which is just how The Denier likes it.

It has no gadgets or traps, no real features of a villain's super-HQ, though the Denier has installed cells and torture devices in the spacious cellar. There are typically about a dozen Hell-Raiser agents (see sidebars, pp. 17-18), plus some of the supers, at any given time.

Titan was captured by the player's super-team, substitute another ex-Forty Thieves member and similar errand). Metal and the PCs might be able to get there first. Metal will divulge Flare's secret identity to the PCs, but will feel guilty about it.

Episode Six: The Mall

Flare isn't stupid. She knows that Titan will probably reveal her identity and lead the Hell-Raisers here. She has closed down the Sultan's Palace early today, sent the disappointed kids away, knocked the phone off the hook to eliminate distractions, and begun gathering her personal effects so that she can get out of town fast. Any Forty Thieves remaining with her are doing the same thing.

At this point, the Hell-Raisers show up, blasting their way in through the Ridgcrest Mall east entrance (by the cinema and the lingerie shop); the heroes, arriving from another direction, will see the Hell-Raisers entering the mall. Flare heard the boom of the Hell-Raisers' approach and she and the remaining Forty Thieves have just gotten under cover. When the PCs arrive, the Hell-Raisers are just now flushing her and her charges out.

The Final Battle

It's now time for the fight to the finish between the Hell-Raisers and the forces of good. This time around, Flare and her remaining charges are against the Hell-Raisers, which should give the PCs a slight advantage. On the other hand, if this gives them an overwhelming advantage, the GM should play the Hell-Raisers to maximum efficiency and limit the Forty Thieves' effectiveness.

Let this fight run its course. It's comeuppance time for the villains and cooperation time for the PCs and Forty Thieves. The GM should encourage the PCs to make use of the interesting terrain and props to be found in all the stores through which they fly, run and crash (see map, next page).

With the edge in numbers on the side of the PCs, the Hell-Raisers should eventually start dropping. If the fight is too even, The Denier could let slip, in combat, his plans to kill Flare, which will turn against him any Forty Thieves who sided with him earlier (except Titan, who doesn't mind).

During the fight, Plasma activates his powers to defend himself or help the PCs. Toward the fight's end, as the Hell-Raisers begin dropping at a serious rate, Plasma will panic as his powers go completely out of control — he can't control the enormous energies. If it looks as though the PCs intend just to blast him until he falls over, the GM should make his force field impregnable — make the players use their brains (and some cooperation) to deal with his power overload.

How can they deal with it? Well, the plasma field is a manifestation of a psychic ability to heat gases surrounding his body to extreme temperatures. Flare knows this, and will tell the PCs. They might figure out that they need to surround him with massive cold, airtight insulators or something similar — at least until his powers shut off.

Coldsnap's blasts aren't enough. No one hero's powers should be enough. But if they can coordinate their efforts, they should see some results. They could use the mall's water fountains and water from the fire-control system, or smother him with vast quantities of earth, or several characters with appropriate powers (cold, water, smothering gases, insulating extrusions, whatever) could bombard him. And, if they do cooperate they'll gradually see his power dampening down, and down . . . until it finally shuts off, and Plasma passes out.

If the PCs don't seem to be coming up with an idea to shut down the reaction, the GM could have one of the NPCs make some suggestions — but he should wait until the last minute to give the PCs a chance to figure it out for themselves.

Aftermath and Epilogue

Plasma is contained (or dead — see sidebar, p. 19). The Hell-Raisers are defeated, and most or all of them are captured. The PCs have Flare and the Forty Thieves on their hands, and the police and ambulances are coming.

What now? Their decisions at this point will affect their future interactions with the authorities and (especially) Flare and the Forty Thieves.

So, what's it to be? The GM should ask the PCs. He should let them offer suggestions for the courses of action they intend to take, and tell them what sort of results those decisions will bring about. Then, let them decide.

Here are some probable courses for their choices, listed by the NPCs involved:

The Hell-Raisers

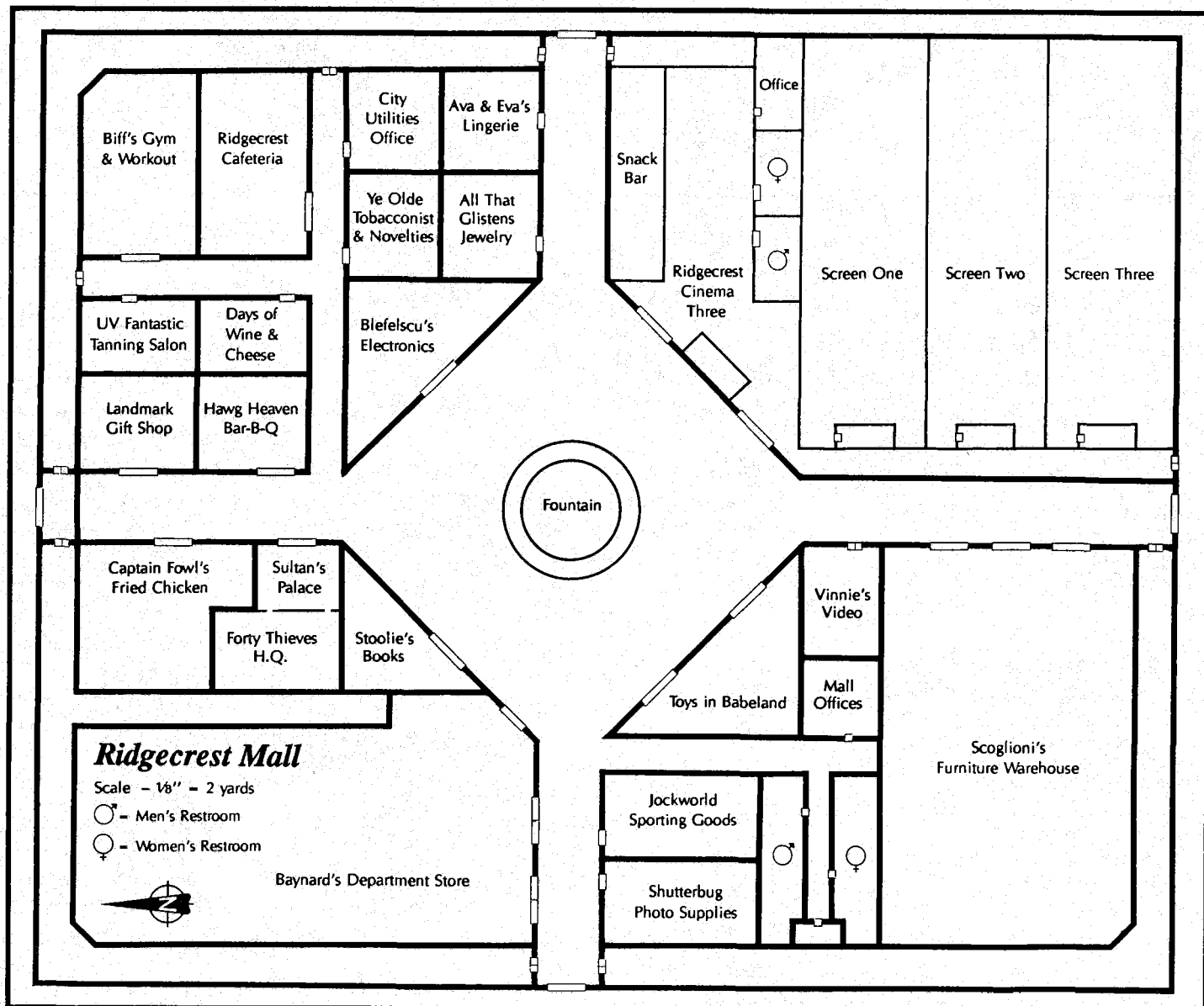
All captured Hell-Raisers will be taken into custody by the authorities, who, if there are no super-proof jails in the campaign city, will want the PCs' help in keeping them temporarily incarcerated until they can be moved to a suitable facility. This is a good chance for the PCs to build up some good-will from the authorities by cooperating with them.

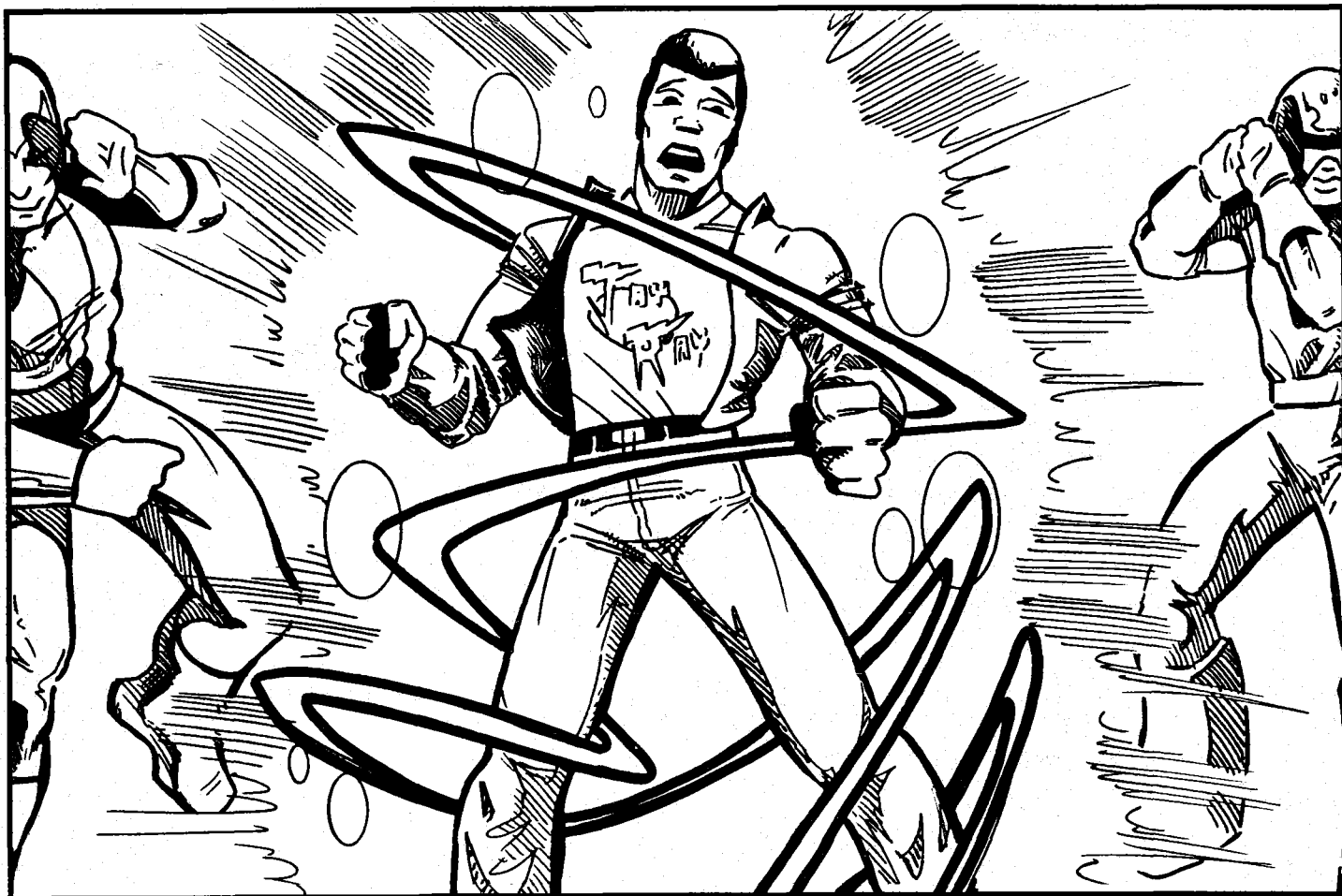
The Hell-Raisers Agents

The Hell-Raisers agents are people who have been pulled from the depths of misery by The Denier, and persuaded by him to serve the Hell-Raisers. He has psychologically warped them into a devoted, insane and formidable team of normal human agents. They have no sense of self-worth except through The Denier; they will do whatever he tells them like dogs snapping to the orders of their master.

The male agents wear black pants, black boots, and a black executioner-style hood, along with wrist bracers; they wear no shirts. They carry executioners' axes.

The female agents wear bustiers and bikini-bottoms, garter belts and hose (the Denier is definitely a fetishist male-chauvinist villain). They carry ranged electronic stun weapons and tear-gas canisters.





The Denier is wanted by the police for murder, contributing to the delinquency of juveniles, grand theft, and many other crimes. Most of the other Hell-Raisers are wanted for conspiracy on the same charges. They'll go to jail for as long as they can be held — probably not very long for The Denier and Tai.

Male Hell-Raisers Agents

ST 15, DX 12, IQ 10, HT 10.

Advantages: Toughness (2 levels).

Disadvantages: Fanaticism (Follower of The Denier); Overconfidence; Severe Delusion (The Denier is a god).

Skills: Axe/Mace-13; Brawling 14; Guns (Pistol)-13; Occultism-9; Sex Appeal-14.

Weapons and Equipment: Great Axe (2d+4 cutting).

Female Hell-Raisers Agents

ST 10, DX 15, IQ 10, HT 12.

Advantages: Toughness (2 levels).

Disadvantages: Fanaticism (Follower of The Denier); Overconfidence; Severe Delusion (The Denier is a God).

Skills: Guns (Pistol)-17; Karate-17; Sex Appeal-16; Occultism-9.

Weapons and Equipment: .38 caliber pistol, 12 extra rounds (2d-1, cr).

Flare

The PCs could take her into custody and send her up the river for her crimes (she's sufficiently exhausted and depressed that she wouldn't try to evade arrest at this point), or could try to persuade her to give up her plans for building a criminal team, and let her go free.

This is an important choice for them to make. There is nothing in the wreckage to connect Angelique Marin with Flare — only the PCs know her secret ID — so it's their choice whether to expose her. They must decide whether she should be charged or set free.

She'll gladly strike a deal — such as her getting out of town and not pursuing her plan any further if no action is taken against her. If it sounds like the characters are trying blackmail, and will continue to hold her secret identity against her in the future, she'll refuse, and furiously tell them why; but if their deal is a deal instead of blackmail, she'll accept.

The Forty Thieves will also be in favor of such an arrangement, and will tell the PCs so. If the heroes send Flare up the river, the Forty Thieves' own secret identities may be revealed.

If the PCs do strike a deal, Flare will honor it. She may become a mercenary super for hire, she may get involved with supers psychology in her secret identity, she may go into acting or teaching. Whatever her choice, she's out of the meta-villain racket.

If the PCs turn her in they make an enemy of her. She goes to trial on charges of kidnapping, contributing to the delinquency of minors, theft, damage to public property, etc. And, when she comes to trial, months later, she beats most of those charges.

Testimony from the other Forty Thieves convinces the jury that they weren't kidnapped, but went willingly with Flare, which eliminates the kidnapping charges. The theft charges don't stick as the underworld figures involved don't press charges. The armored car companies press charges, but it turns out that only Titan was involved in those thefts, and Flare is cleared on them. Since no thefts are provable, and since Flare's lawyer provides striking testimony that the Forty Thieves were generally better off with her than with their rightful guardians, she narrowly beats the contributing-to-delinquency charge.

She is convicted on the property destruction charge, pays a hefty fine, and is now back on the street — her identity revealed to the world, she is bitterly opposed to the PCs.

Titan

Titan, if captured, will be convicted of the armored-car thefts. He pleads the Fifth Amendment and reveals no secret identities to the court. When he gets out of jail (he's tried as an adult) he'll seek revenge on the members of the Forty Thieves who "betrayed" him (i.e., took a shot at him during one of the fights).

In the long-term campaign, he'll become a recurrent super-scientific villain, always improving his Titan suit, always opposing the player characters. He's brilliant and a sociopath, and could become a very menacing villain.

Plasma

Dr. Trammell will work up some drug treatments to temporarily suppress his power's psychic "trigger." Eventually he'll return home to his understandably relieved parents. Though he'll have to undergo his chemical treatment for many years, perhaps for the rest of his life, he won't reenter the super arena and hopes never to manifest his powers again.

The Rest of the Forty Thieves

The rest of Flare's teen protégés have had their fill of super-crime and super-crimefighters. A few will reconcile with their parents and return home. Others will be placed with foster families — and Dr. Trammel offers to put up any who wish to stay with her. Some will eventually be drawn back into the world of metahumans, but for now, they are retired.

Knox High School and Ridgecrest Mall

Grand jury inquests hold the Hell-Raisers responsible for the damage to Knox High School and Ridgecrest Mall. Local prosecutors think about leveling breaking-and-entering charges against the PCs and Forty Thieves but decide against it. Working with local engineers, Dreamer, with a couple of days of intensive work, repairs the majority of the damage to the two buildings.

Of course, these events can be influenced by the way the PCs deal with the NPCs. Perhaps they will invite members of the Forty Thieves into their own team; perhaps they'll get involved with some of the NPCs as friends, colleagues or romantic interests. Any of the above resolutions may be altered by the actions of the characters — as always, the GM should use his own judgement!

If The Heroes Fail to Save Plasma

If the heroes fail to shut Plasma down, they're going to witness a tragedy.

At the point in the fight when the GM is sure they're not going to get clever enough to shut the boy's powers down, he should have them become aware of a rapidly-mounting high-pitched whine coming from Plasma. Plasma is screaming and writhing around out of control, his energy blasts going everywhere, and this whine is mounting and mounting.

Anyone with Common Sense, experience with demolitions, or knowledge of sciences pertaining to Plasma's powers will be able to figure out that he's going to blow up. The heroes' mission at this point is to get themselves and any innocents clear of him and the mall.

The GM should give them several turns (a minimum of four, maximum of ten, depending on circumstances) to accomplish this. At the end of the time, Plasma will explode and perish — detonating with enough force to wreck the inside of the mall.

Plasma's casebook is closed — tragically, but unmistakably closed.

Future Adventures

The activities of Cell 13 of the Jensik Medical Institute are a fertile ground for future adventure.

Flare and/or Dr. Leigh Trammell could pass on what they know about Jensik to the PCs, prompting the heroes to investigate the institute — and to incur the wrath of Cell 13. Also, Cell 13's experiments and waste-dumping are continually creating new supers and super-monsters . . . not to mention hundreds and thousands of cancer-related deaths. These events will finally add up in the minds of the PCs and point at Jensik.

Don't forget that Cell 13 could have had *some* repeatable successes and could have its own enforcement crew of chemically-created supers. Cell 13 will be no pushover for the player characters.

THE VILLAINS

Everyone in the adventure who has super abilities and isn't allied with the party is considered a villain. By adventure's end, some may be counted as heroes, some as neutrals, and many will remain on the wrong side of the law . . .

The skills given are those that might reasonably come into play during the adventure. They are *not* the final word on the character! If the GM needs a villain with the Scuba skill, he should pick the bad guy he likes the most and tack it on. It is this customization process that will make each campaign unique!

The Hell-Raisers

The Hell-Raisers have been a team for a little over a year. They were initially assembled by The Denier for a one-time job, but it worked out so well that he kept them together. They are experienced in working together, and will (usually) cooperate with each other in battle. Each of the team members is familiar with the powers of the other members, and can spot when an ally is in trouble or outclassed. Scanner, in particular, hangs back and makes sure that things go smoothly, lending aid as needed.

The main thing that the GM needs to remember when playing the Hell-Raisers is that about half of the team is completely and totally insane. While they usually work well together, it is not unknown for one of the villains to do something completely irrational in the midst of battle. This gives the GM a good chance to limit the team's effectiveness if it looks like they are going to completely overpower the PCs.

The Hell-Raisers team consists of The Denier, Sizzler, Scanner, Briareus, Drill-Bit, Mind Master and Tai. All but The Denier are built with approximately 500 points — The Denier is built with 1,000 points.

The Denier

Note: The Denier's name is pronounced as in "deny-er," (one who denies).

Human Form: Male human, white, age 49, apparent age 30, 6' 4", 280 lbs., short black hair, blood-red eyes, greyish complexion.

Demonic Form: Dusky red skin, huge batwings (not attached to arms), protruding horns, pointed tail, extra hair on lower legs, claws on hands and feet.

Costume: The Denier wears a broad black leather belt with panels of black suede hanging from it, in front and behind; he wears no other garments or ornamentation.

ST 100, DX 13, IQ 14, HT 15.

Advantages: Appearance (Handsome, human form); Charisma (5 levels); Damage Resistance (40 levels); Doesn't Breathe; Impaling Claws (enhancement: Armor Piercing); Flight; Super Flight (2 levels); Transformation; Wealth (Filthy Rich).

Disadvantages: Appearance (Hideous, demon form); Enemy (Police, on 9 or less); Intolerance (Weaklings); Megalomania; Secret Identity; Unluckiness.

Skills: Area Knowledge (U.S. Universities)-15; Brawling-18; Occultism-14; Sex Appeal-18.

Powers: Teleport Power 22.

Super Skills: Autoteleport (limitations: Only to Hell and back, Once per Day)-20; Exoteleport (limitations: Only to Hell and back, Once per day)-20.



Story: Once upon a time, it might have been easy to sell one's soul to the nether powers. Since those days, the demonic forces seem to have become more choosy, preferring only to deal with those who acquire enough knowledge to contact *them*.

One such person was Jason Haller. Born in 1940, before the vaccination has been developed, Haller was stricken with polio. He never recovered from what he considered the gross unfairness of his crippling injuries, and grew up angry at the world. The son of a rich man, Haller knew his family would support him, so he became a perpetual student, spending years at one college before moving on to a new one.

In the late '60s, in an esoteric New England college, Haller gained access to a private collection of volumes in the anthropology library. The books, donated by a noted scholar of the occult, contained fragments of spells, hints about the real nature of mystical sites, and clues about the world of the supernatural. After years of study, Haller knew enough to contact the denizens of the demonic planes.

He did so and sold himself to those powers — he got good terms, too. He received a powerful demonic body with which he could rend his enemies, and he could transform into the strong, handsome human body he *should* have had, if polio had not taken it from him. And he never had to make the long march to permanent servitude in hell, *if* he could persuade one innocent per year to sell his own soul and go in Haller's place.

Haller, in his demon form, took the code-name "The Denier" — a nickname for Satan himself, the Great Denier. He dropped his Jason Haller identity forever, leaving behind only an empty wheelchair and a mystery for his family.

Personality: The Denier is a nasty, selfish, decadent, chauvinistic, abusive, dominating monster. He divides his time more or less equally between (1) crimes of destruction and theft; (2) seduction and corruption (in his new human identity of Jason Lazarus) of innocents, especially naive young women; and (3) pursuit of all the diversions and entertainments, especially delights of the flesh, that were denied to him in his previous condition. The Denier's tail is always in motion, even when he

isn't — lashing, moving around, stroking females with undue familiarity.

In spite of his reputation as a master villain, Denier is not much of a tactician. Left to his own devices, his plans are no more subtle than "Break down the door, kill some civilians to cause a panic, grab the money, and fly away." Fortunately, he has Scanner and Tai to help him plan.

Campaign Role: The Denier is a chaotic master villain. He likes staging big, showy robberies, humiliating super crimefighters, religious figures and so forth. He doesn't like long, involved, clever plans, however — he's not that subtle. He is also a corruptor of youth; heroes might stumble across the trail of heartbreak and suicide he leaves in his wake as he takes in youths, seduces them with his evil promises of power, and persuades them to sell themselves to demonic forces.

Battle Tactics: He is a front-line fighter and jumps directly into the fray, leaving Scanner to coordinate the fight.

Typical Dialogue: "If you worship some petty god . . . say goodbye to him now."

Sizzler

Female human, white, age 28, apparent age 16, 5' 7", 127 lbs., long, curly red hair, blue eyes, light complexion.

Costume: A loose piratical silk blouse, tight pants, and broad mask, all in black; with knee-high boots, gloves, sash around waist, and kerchief around throat all in red.

ST 10, DX 16, IQ 10, HT 13.

Advantages: Appearance (Beautiful); Body of Fire (10 levels, enhancement: Switchable); Costume; Damage Resistance (DR 25); Fast Regeneration; Flight; Super Flight (1 level).

Disadvantages: Enemy (Police, 9 or less); Impulsiveness; Lecherousness; Secret Identity; Sense of Duty (To the Hell-Raisers).

Skills: Artist-12; Driving-10; Language (French)-12.

Powers: Fire/Heat Power 12.

Super Skills: 6d+6 Fireball-20; 6d+6 Flame Jet-20; Neutralize Fire-16.

Story: Dana Lindstrom's family has been involved with the supernatural for several centuries. Her ancestors include witches, psychics, charlatans, prophets . . . and, two generations back, a genuine demon. Dana's grandmother had summoned the hellish creature to strike a deal — in the process she bore its child. That son manifested no supernatural abilities, but his firstborn child, Dana, *did*. Since her infancy, nearby objects have shown an unhealthy tendency to burst into flame in her presence.

This power manifested itself very infrequently during her childhood and early adolescence. But one family Christmas her powers emerged. Like waters crashing through a disintegrating dam, her ancestry caught up with her. As these changes were taking place in her, waves of flame were pouring off her body, incinerating everyone assembled for the celebration. When she awoke, she was an orphan in the care of her grandmother, who was delighted to help her learn about her powers.

Granny taught her to use her powers for self-fulfillment and for the advancement of evil forces. For the last decade, as the costumed villainess Sizzler, Dana has done exactly that.

When The Denier formed the Hell-Raisers, one of the first supers he chose to contact was Sizzler, about whom he had read many good things (from his point of view) in the press.

Personality: Sizzler is self-absorbed, hedonistic, and very unpredictable. She forms very strong relationships with people

who share her view of the world, and would never abandon such allies to enemies. She has such a relationship with The Denier. She sees herself as an artist beautifying the world. Fire is her paintbrush, and just about anything can be her canvas: cities, heroic supers, innocent bystanders, etc.

At the scenes of her crimes, she often leaves quite beautiful little pictures of monsters and demons delicately burned into walls, embankments, picture windows, etc. — her "signature."

Campaign Role: Sizzler is a villainous free spirit and mad-woman. Mere capture and psychoanalysis would never cure her — she'd have to be have her powers neutralized (which would require an expedition to an outer hell). Sizzler's regenerative abilities have kept her at a cosmetic age of 16, while she's had a dozen years of combat and experience as a meta-villain. Heroes tend to underestimate her because of her youthful appearance.

Battle Tactics: Sizzler usually takes to the air and goes after flying enemies. When given a choice of enemies, she'll go after the one least like herself. Logical, disciplined heroes offend her, as do those with powers opposed to her own (cold, water, and so on).

Typical Dialogue: "Ooh, that burns me up. Allow me to return the favor . . ."

Scanner

Male human, white, age 35, 5' 11", 160 lbs., brown hair in a crewcut, brown eyes, rough complexion.

Costume: Scanner's costume consists of his Kevlar overcoat, knee-high combat boots and elbow-length gloves in dark blue, and metal-mesh arms and legs in light blue. His helmet, which leaves his lower face free, is light blue around the eyes and dark blue elsewhere. When not wearing his helmet, Scanner wears a fedora pulled down over his face.

ST 14, DX 14, IQ 13, HT 13.

Advantages: High Pain Threshold; Invisibility (enhancement: Switchable); Legal Enforcement Powers (Private Detective, 5 points).

Disadvantages: Enemy (Police, on 6 or less); Greed; Laziness; Overconfidence; Secret Identity; Vulnerability to Electrical Attacks (3d).

Skills: Area Knowledge (Campaign City)-14; Criminology-16; Karate-17; Streetwise-14.

Powers: Telepathy Power 21.

Super Skills: Mental Blow (enhancement: Affects Insubstantial)-18; Mental Stab (enhancement: Affects Insubstantial)-18; Mind Shield-16; Telereceive-11; Telescan-20; Telesend-11.

Equipment: Scanner wears an armored overcoat (see p. HT96) with PD 1, DR 12, and carries a .44 IMI Eagle automatic pistol with 2 spare clips (see p. B208).

Story: As a child Joe Warriner seemed destined to grow up and become a cheap hood. He had no class, no sense of honor, nothing. Well — *almost* nothing. He had the remarkable ability of finding people. When a neighbor's child was missing, Joe went over to the railroad tracks and found him. When his cousin Laura disappeared, he took a couple of friends with him to a drug dealer's house and rescued her from a slide into addiction and prostitution.

Joe didn't know *how* he found people . . . but he did, and it was a talent he could use to pull himself out of the gutter. He used reward money obtained by locating missing persons to get his private investigator license. Fifteen years later, Warriner Investigations is a small but thriving private detective firm, and is well thought of by the police.

But during those fifteen years, as Warriner constantly used his ability, other powerful psionic skills developed. Today, he is

a psi of enormous power, though he's never had any formal training in parapsychology and doesn't know an alpha wave from the alphabet.

In addition to his above-board activities, Scanner also earns extra income by putting on a disguise and selling his services to criminals. When, for instance, the Mafia needs to locate someone in the government's Witness Protection Program, they call Scanner.

A few years ago, The Denier hired Scanner to find an intended victim, which he did. The Denier liked Scanner's powers and decided to put Scanner on permanent retainer as the first official member of the Hell-Raisers.

Personality: Scanner is lazy and greedy. He likes money; the easiest way for him to get a lot of it is to use his powers. If there were some easier and more dependable way, he'd put away his costume and detective agency forever. He has to be motivated (scared or ordered) to go into combat, but once he's in the thick of it he fights furiously — he grew up a street tough, after all.

Scanner likes cruel practical jokes involving his powers. He knocks drivers out at the wheel, puts store owners to sleep on duty, knocks animals out as they're crossing the road, etc.

Campaign Role: Scanner, in his Warriner ID, has a good enough reputation that the PCs might hire him at some later date (if he isn't caught in this adventure!).

Battle Tactics: Scanner prefers to hang back and direct his teammates. With his powers, he keeps tabs on opponents who disappear. When the situation is critical, he uses his Mental Blow on enemies, or turns invisible and shoots them. He doesn't like to use his mind-destroying Mental Stab, but will when confronting other psis who rival or intimidate him.

Typical Dialogue: (both for combat and when he's feeling romantic) "Time for a little mind over matter . . ."

Briareus

Male android, indeterminate age, 6' 8", 450 lbs, no hair, yellow eyes, four arms, very muscular, yellow skin, large fangs.

Costume: black trunks and a broad golden belt.

ST 150, DX 13, IQ 5, HT 14.

Advantages: Damage Resistance (30 levels); Doesn't Breathe; Extra Arms (two); Full Coordination (2 levels, total of three 15d punching attacks per turn); High Pain Threshold; Increased Density (2 levels).

Disadvantages: Appearance (Ugly); Enemy (Police, on 12 or less); Fanaticism (follower of The Denier); Mute; Vulnerability to Water Attacks (4d).

Story: A biomedical genius known as The Craftsman creates android servants for every occasion, selling them to the villain community and to very rich people with special tastes. One of his most popular lines is the Asterisk Series — huge, four-armed, very strong, obedient androids about as bright as German Shepherds.

One armored car carrying an Asterisk android to its purchaser skidded on a wet road and overturned. The android panicked, bashed its way out of the car, took a look at the dead drivers, began bawling and charged off into the woods. Days later, hungry and scared, it was found and befriended by The Denier.

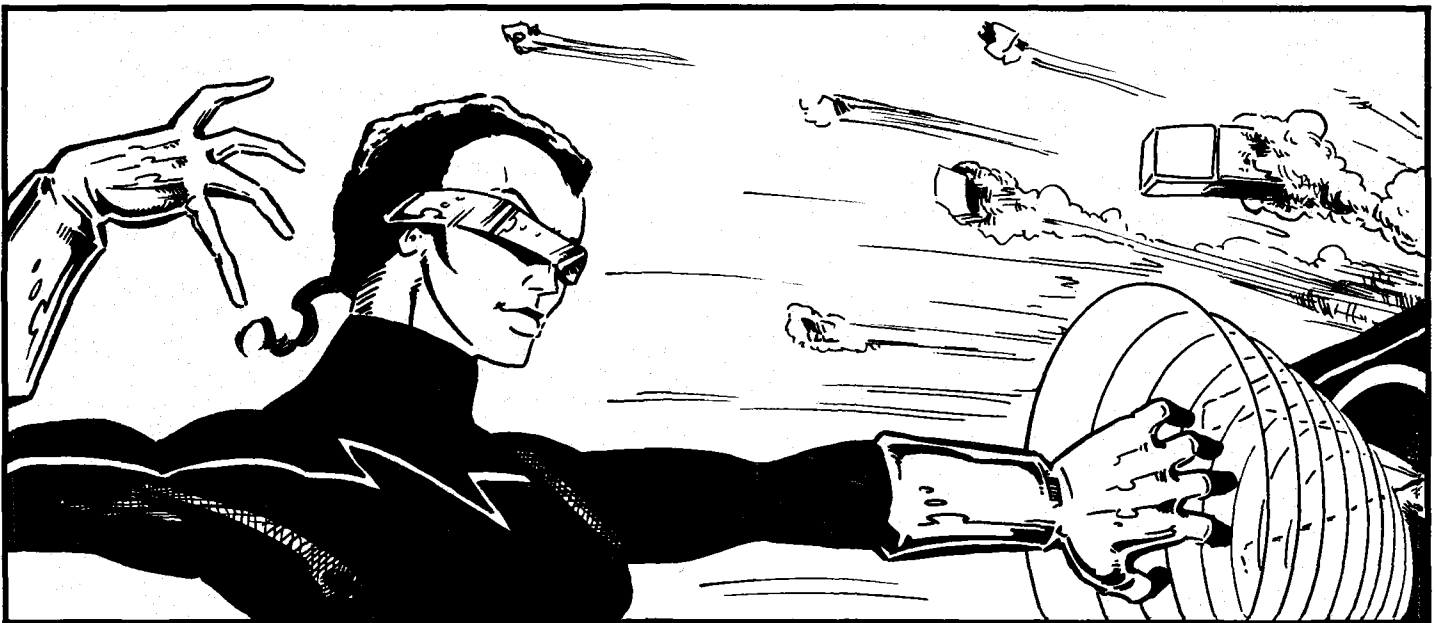
The Denier named the android Briareus, after an obscure Greek monster with a hundred arms, and became his patron. Briareus became the principle muscle of the Hell-Raisers. He obeys The Denier slavishly, and will crush whatever The Denier wants him to crush.

Personality: When not ordered to destroy things, Briareus is peaceable and childlike — he plays with little plastic soldiers and is distracted by pretty things and bright colors. He does not speak, but can grunt quite well. Though not highly intelligent, he understands simple commands such as "Crush police. Crush hero. Throw car. Use napkin." He will obey anyone in the Hell-Raisers, but Denier's orders take precedence over anyone else's. Briareus has the strange habit of trying to make friends with statues.

Campaign Role: Briareus is basically a combat machine, turned on or off at The Denier's whim. It would theoretically be possible for a hero to befriend him, but it would be hard to win his loyalty completely away from The Denier — it would require that Briareus be separated from The Denier for a long time, and eventually shown how evil and destructive The Denier really is.

Battle Tactics: Briareus walks up to his target and hits it, or grabs and crushes it, until it doesn't move anymore. If the target collapses, disappears, or behaves in such a fashion that Briareus can't get to it, Briareus will just pick a new target. Occasionally Scanner or The Denier will tell him how to defeat a foe: "No — he's too fast for you! Pick up that car and hit him with it!"

Typical Dialogue: (whenever his name is called) "Hrunh?"



Drill-Bit

Female human, black, age 31, 5' 9", 135 lbs., short black hair, brown eyes, light complexion.

Costume: Silver-and-black body stocking from neck to foot, silver bracers on forearms, silver greaves on lower legs, and silver reflective goggles.

ST 10, DX 14, IQ 13, HT 11.

Advantages: Mathematical Ability; Strong Will (3 levels).

Disadvantages: Intolerance (normals); Paranoia; Unluckiness.

Skills: Acting-9; Cooking-9; Computer Operation-16; Computer Programming-13; Diagnosis-13; First Aid-15; Genetics-12; Physician-15; Physics-13.

Power Suit: (based on a PD 4, DR 15 set of light body armor).

Advantages: Enhanced ST 80 (once per day, 10-minute duration); Flight; Invulnerability to Sonic Attacks; Passive Defense (3 levels); Tunnel (1 hex per turn); Sonic Force Field (can be formed in any shape, including around her body for standard DR. Bought as 30 levels of Damage Resistance with the Wall enhancement twice).

Powers: Sonic Power (single skill) 14.

Super Skills: 7d+7 Sonic Blast (enhancements: Affects Insubstantial and Armor Piercing)-16.

The suit is -8 to hit in combat (the vital components are well protected), breakable (DR 25, HP 120), and unique.

Story: Louise Tobias' father Harry was a pioneer in cancer treatment. He developed several promising treatments, including sonic projections for combating tumors, and chemotherapy with significantly reduced side effects, when he was informed that he had contracted lung cancer and could expect to live another two years.

Trusting his medical instincts, he immediately put himself on the full program of his own treatments, with his daughter Louise, herself a doctor, acting as his assistant. This was illegal — his techniques had not yet been approved for human testing. But his instincts appeared to be confirmed as his cancer went into remission and later vanished completely.

Meanwhile, further study was revealing some alarming facts about his chemotherapy formula. Though they had a certain erratic effectiveness against some forms of cancer, they inevitably altered the brain's chemical balance and drove the patient insane. One treatment was enough for some patients — with even the most resistant, six months of regular treatment would result in madness.

This was the case with Tobias. Though cured of cancer, he became quite insane. He secretly indoctrinated his daughter with the chemical so that she would be "resistant to cancer." Louise was one of the unlucky ones — a single dose was enough to drive her mad. Together, the two Tobiases planned to make the world a better place. They'd rid the world of cancer, treating everyone, willing or no. First, they'd need lots of money . . . and Tobias' sonic-beam device, whose applications had barely been explored, was to be the key. The Tobiases discovered many uses for the beam device. It could be used to generate walls of force around sites or even individual people. These force fields could move with the wearer, stop bullets, damage objects coming in contact with them, and even provide short-term boosts to the wearer's physical strength. They could be used as offensive weapons and even as a means to propel the device in flight.

Harry and Louise developed a sound-dampening costume which would allow the wearer to wield the new, miniaturized versions of the sonic projectors. Harry was the first wearer of the costume. Calling himself Man-Drill, he robbed numerous

banks and stashed the loot for future use. But Harry, nearly 60 years of age, wasn't really fit for the rigors of a villain's life. During a bank robbery, Harry suffered a massive heart attack. Knowing that he was dying, he radioed one last, paranoid message to his daughter (saying that the police had done him in with their heart-attack raygun) and set his sonic devices to explode. They did, and the authorities couldn't find enough left of him to identify.

Louise, embittered, decided that since the world had turned against her father, she'd turn against the world. She abandoned the plan to cure the world of cancer — "Let them die" became her motto. She rebuilt and improved the Man-Drill suit, in the process learning how to spin while wearing it in order to drill through the ground or building walls, and began to wear it herself, calling herself Drill-Bit. In the three years since, she has become a successful robber and villainous super.

Personality: Louise/Drill-Bit stole enough money to retire on long ago, but chooses to continue her crime spree to make people unhappy. She is now dedicated to inflicting misery on the human race; she smashes orphanages, ruins parades, steals candy from babies, wrecks hospitals, etc. It was these qualities that made her attractive to The Denier — when he invited her into the Hell-Raisers, she couldn't wait to join.

Campaign Role: Drill-Bit is extremely erratic. She has no real sense of direction, other than in punishing the wicked (i.e., everyone but herself and her teammates), so in a campaign she is an eternal minion, ceaselessly pursuing her mission but being directed by more disciplined minds.

Drill-Bit poses a terrifying potential threat to the world. What if she again decides that everyone should be treated with the Tobias formula? If her mission is successful, the whole world could be driven mad . . .

Battle Tactics: Drill-Bit likes slugging it out with heroes. She'll avoid a really powerful enemy if he starts to hurt her, but will otherwise duke it out with anyone, especially ground-bound heroes. If she starts to take the worst of a fight, she'll retreat and use her ranged powers.

Typical Dialogue: "You're boring me, hero; it's time for me to bore *you* for a change!"

Mind Master

Male human, white, age 38, 5' 8", 150 lbs., brown hair, brown, wild eyes, two days beard growth (minimum) at all times.

Costume: Mind Master's costume consists of a black mask (not covering his lower face), stiff V-shaped tabard, trunks, belt, boots and gloves, all worn over a shiny head-to-foot bodysuit. The bodysuit is colored in a grotesque psychedelic pattern, with color blobs in international orange, lavender, turquoise blue, mauve, industrial green, and other thrilling hues.

As a side-effect of his powers, little sparkles of light occasionally shoot out of his head and then revolve around it, eventually burning out or reentering his head. At any given time, he may have no such sparkles, just one, or several — the more agitated he gets, the more he has.

ST 12, DX 13, IQ 15, HT 12.

Advantages: Rapid Healing.

Disadvantages: Enemy (Police, on 9 or less); Paranoia; Severe Delusion (He's the advance warrior of a conquering alien race.); Vulnerability (2d to Mental Blow & Stab); Weak Will (4 levels, limitation: only versus illusions); Weirdness Magnet.

Skills: None worth mentioning. He is totally insane, and spends most of his free time constructing elaborate space radios out of aluminum foil and transistor radio parts.

Powers: Telepathy Power 12; Alteration Power 16 (single skill).

Super Skills: Drain Attribute (HT)-19; Drain Attribute (IQ)-19; Illusion-17; Mind Shield-12; Sleep-19; Telecontrol-25; Telereceive-15; Telesend-15.

Equipment: Heavy Kevlar body armor (PD 2, DR 12).

Story: Edward Hope was an English tourist visiting the campaign city setting on holiday. Hiking and fishing outside city limits, he foolishly drank some river water . . . and he chose a spot just downstream from one of Cell 13's favorite dumping spots, ingesting a near-fatal dose of toxic water.

The poison sent Hope into a three-day hallucinatory nightmare. As he lay in his camp, suffering from dehydration and exposure, the toxins drove him mad. His hallucinations convinced him that he was being abducted by space aliens in a flying saucer, whisked off to their psychedelic world, tortured for information, then redesigned to become the advance warrior of their race. The toxins also meddled with his biochemistry, freeing and enhancing the vestigial psychic powers which many humans possess.

When Hope awoke, he firmly believed that he now belonged, body and soul, to the space aliens who'd reengineered him. His mission was to wreck world civilization so that the aliens could invade and take over with little resistance.

He embarked on a career of mayhem and destruction, centering his attention on government authority — kidnapping or murdering civil servants, harassing police, and causing elected officials to do dangerous and irresponsible things. He's been captured twice, but has always escaped. Ultimately, he ran into The Denier, who knew he could use such a powerful maniac in the Hell-Raisers, and Mind Master accepted his invitation.

Personality: Mind Master is completely paranoid and deranged. Once he becomes convinced of something, he is very firm in his convictions. He *knows*, for instance, that he is the true leader of the Hell-Raisers and is training The Denier as a replacement in case something happens to him (he doesn't discuss this with anyone but The Denier, who humors him). He also *knows* that the space aliens have installed a radio in his skull and occasionally send him new orders, instructions and warnings. And he is convinced that, any day now, the alien invasion force will show up and take over.

Campaign Role: Mind Master can be a great "wild card" to throw at heroes in an ongoing campaign. Because of his unpredictable nature, he can reappear at almost any time — and for almost any reason!

Battle Tactics: Mind Master tends to use each of his mental powers in turn on different targets, maintaining their effects. He'll try to force one hero to attack another, then use his illusory abilities to convince a third hero that the second one is actually a villain, and so on.

Typical Dialogue: "All right, hero, you've — say, nice shoes! Where do you — wait, it's a trick! Your satellite microwave mind-scramblers can have no effect on *me*, pitiful fool!"

Tai (Nosferatu)

Male human, vampire, white, age 39, apparent age 25, 5' 11", 175 lbs., black hair, brown eyes.

Costume: Tai wears no costume. He prefers to dress all in black — boots, tight pants, and long-sleeved shirt with a black tie.

ST 25, DX 14, IQ 13, HT 14.

Advantages: Clinging (limitation: only at night); Damage Resistance (DR 40, limitations: won't work versus light, fire, or

holy attacks); Dark Vision; Impaling Claws; Insubstantiality (limitation: only at night); Invisibility (limitation: only to mirrors); Invisibility to Machines; Super Running (limitation: only in wolf form).

Disadvantages: Dependency (human blood, weekly); Enemy (Police, on 9 or less); Overconfident; Vulnerability (3d each to fire and light attacks); Severe Phobia (anti-vampire measures such as garlic, crosses, etc.); Major Delusion (can't enter a home unless invited in).

Powers: Alteration Power 24 (single skill); Telepathy Power 4.

Super Skills: Morph-16 (limitations: can never learn new forms; doesn't need morph memory. Available forms are bat, rat, and wolf.); Telereceive-13; Telecontrol-17 (enhancement: Anyone controlled for seven consecutive nights at midnight becomes a vampire).

Equipment: Black Mazda 300ZX Turbo, 2-way radio, Kevlar body armor (PD 2, DR 12), H&K PSG1 .308 sniper rifle (firing a special subsonic load with a silencer: Dmg 3d+2; SS 15; Acc 10; ½D 300; Max 1,200; all other stats — see p. B209).

Story: Tyler's father, Dmitri Markov, defected to the U.S. not long after the Second World War. He found a wife and reared his children in the U.S. He taught his children to speak Russian, but raised them as patriotic Americans — which is why Tyler was a gung-ho volunteer for the armed forces when he reached age 18, at the height of the Vietnam war.

Recruited into the CIA after two tours, Tyler was a good agent and was sent behind the Iron Curtain on many occasions — one too many, as it turns out. The KGB official he was ordered to eliminate captured Tyler with ease, and over a period of a week turned Tyler into a creature like himself . . . a vampire. Tyler was that creature's thrall for many years, and would have remained so forever had not a monster-hunter slain his master. Tyler escaped before the hunter could eliminate him too, and worked his way back to the States.

Back in the U.S., Tyler realized that the CIA would never believe his story — they would assume that he had come back to be a double agent. Besides, Tyler thought, with his powers he could embark in a profitable career doing exactly what he did for the government — assassination.

Tyler Markov was no longer. He began calling himself "Tai," an alteration of his army nickname of Ty. With his typically ghoulish sense of humor, he added the tag "Nosferatu" (a Slavic word meaning "undead") to his business card.

The Denier first hired him as backup in a Hell-Raisers operation, and liked the stylish vampire so much that he put him on the payroll permanently.

Personality: Tai pretends to be a Russian and speaks with a noticeable Russian accent — until the Hell-Raisers are in any sort of search-and-destroy operation, at which time he drops the accent and becomes very soldierly. He enjoys being a vampire, and enjoys playing it up.

Campaign Role: Tai is a sneak and assassin — he is the one assigned to infiltrate enemy positions (such as super bases) to rescue prisoners and steal vital information.

Battle Tactics: For the Hell-Raisers, Tai adds military tactical expertise the player-characters won't like. He doesn't usurp Scanner's second-in-command role, but will often make intelligent battle recommendations. He will generally stay out of range (especially in daylight) and snipe at foes with his rifle. Only at night, or when absolutely necessary, will he enter into the thick of the fray.

The Forty Thieves

The Forty Thieves team consists of Flare, Psi-Blast, Titan, Metal, Coldsnap and Dreamer (that's the order in which they were recruited). Plasma is to be next on the list. The team's goals (in Flare's order of priority) are: accumulate a lot of money; deal with the kids' problems; try to figure out how to use their powers in a more profitable and less dangerous way than robbery.

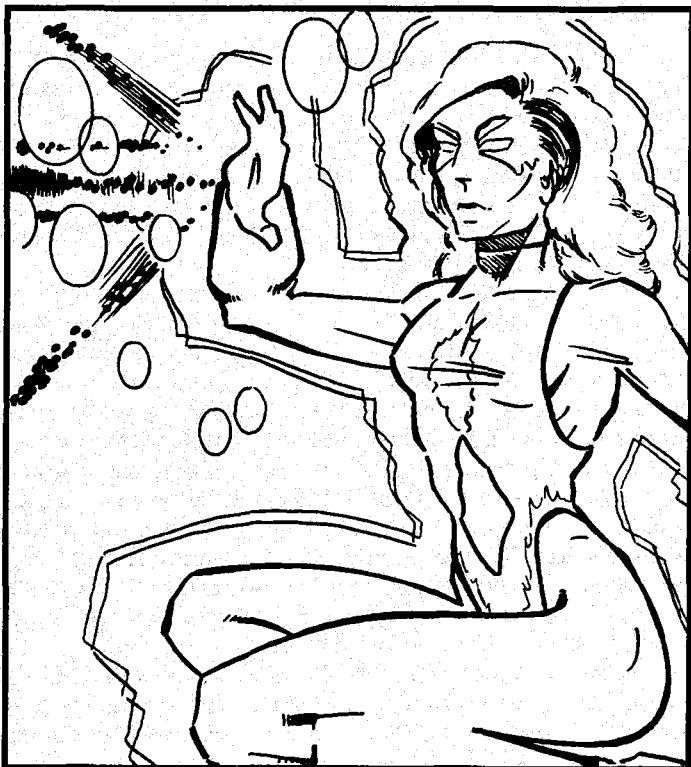
Flare is designed with 750 points, the rest of the Forty Thieves are 400 points — much less experienced than the Hell-Raisers!

This inexperience will show in the team's battle tactics. The Forty Thieves do not cooperate well together — instead, they tend to square off one-on-one with an opponent and ignore everything else going on around them. To make matters worse, they sometimes aren't very wise in their selection of opponents — Coldsnap will attack a villain using a flame weapon, for instance. An experienced team (such as the PCs or the Hell-Raisers) should be able to thrash them soundly in an equal combat. The main thing that the GM should remember about the Forty Thieves is that they are just kids. They can be intimidated by an obviously powerful foe, and will become extremely frightened and worried if they begin to take any serious damage.

Flare

Female human, white, age 24, 5' 9", 135 lbs., golden blond hair, brown eyes, light brown skin.

Costume: Black body stocking (legless, armless, rises up to form collar, diamond-shaped opening at midriff), with flame patterns on bosom and lower edge; knee-high boots and elbow-length gloves; mask-shaped makeup across eyes and upper face. The flame designs, boots, gloves, and makeup are the same color as one another, but not the same color every day; she has costumes with these elements in blue, gold, flame-red and white. She always wears gold hoop-style earrings, but they are clip-on style in case they're torn from her in combat.



ST 14, DX 15, IQ 13, HT 13.

Advantages: Appearance (Very Beautiful); Damage Resistance (30 levels); Flight; Instant Regeneration; Passive Defense (4 levels); Super Flight (1 level).

Disadvantages: Enemy (Police, on 9 or less); Enemy (Hell-Raisers, on 12 or less); Greed; Secret Identity; Vulnerability (4d to cold attacks).

Skills: Disguise-15; Driving-13; Language (French)-12; Psychology-13; Professional Skill (Modelling)-14; Sex Appeal-16; Streetwise-12; Teaching-13.

Powers: Heat/Fire Power 16 (single skill); Light Power 10 (single skill).

Super Skills: 8d+8 Flame Jet (enhancements: Affects Insubstantial and Armor Piercing)-16; Flash-13.

Story: Angelique Marin, in her teens, scraped up enough money to get to California and begin realizing her dream of living as a fashion model. She earned enough money to keep her impoverished family going, and to pay for her first year of college.

But in her second year of school, her modeling career dried up — she was, by the standards of the advertising world, too old. She was able to live off her savings for a year, but as the money went away and she couldn't find other work which would allow her to stay in college, she began to grow desperate.

One day, an ad in the university newspaper caught her eye — free medical check-ups for students on financial aid, courtesy of the Jensik Medical Institute. Never one to turn down something free, she had her checkup and passed with flying colors. It wasn't civic goodwill that spurred Jensik to offer free medical services, however. The Cell 13 branch in Los Angeles had offered the examinations as a way of getting access to peoples' cellular material, in the hopes that they'd find subjects especially suited to the newest developments of the *Project Chrysalis* formula (see p. 3).

Angelique's tissue samples indicated that she was a perfect subject for the newest experimental mutagenic process, a process which Cell 13 hoped would allow them to mass-produce supers. Jensik offered Angelique a high-paying job if she would be a test subject for a "new vitamin-based beauty treatment" and do press conferences and TV commercials to tout the treatment. Of course, she immediately agreed.

One injection was all it took. The Cell 13 treatment began massive alterations of Angelique's physiology — alterations which were, initially, cruel and horrible. One center of her brain developed the ability to generate energy in very small, controlled atomic reaction. The first energies wrapped her up in a protective, spherical force field which contracted, crushing her entire body into a ball less than three feet in diameter. Cell 13 medics couldn't get through the force field to help her, but could see her agony.

Crushed and mangled, she began to die. The ongoing mutagenic changes prevented that, however as she began to regenerate. Now, though she was still suffering enough continuous injury to kill her, she was regenerating so fast that she couldn't die.

That was the first half-hour of her transformation. During the second, her energy-production powers developed until they were able to release controlled bursts of energy in several forms. These abilities weren't yet under her conscious control — yet. But now, just over an hour into her transformation, she was no longer human: She was an agonized animal mind trapped in a destroyed and unimaginably painful body. Angelique's internal pain became external destruction. Those in the basement laboratories, those who knew who Angelique was and what

they'd done to her, all died — burned, suffocated and crushed in the wreckage.

As Angelique, a flaming comet, flew through the city, she gradually regained her human form. Minutes later and miles away, naked and exhausted, her force field fading away, Angelique crash-landed in a grain-field and passed out. She woke up days later in the hospital, the presumed victim of an attacker who took her clothing but was scared off before abusing her.

She eventually gained control over her powers, and she knew she'd never have to worry about money again. Wearing a featureless black costume to conceal her identity, she began financing herself with what she considered "victimless" crimes — attacking and robbing drug dealers, for instance. With the money she earned, she finished up college (majoring in psychology, minoring in education) and had to decide what she was going to do with her life.

Though she had powers, she didn't want to be a heroine (Fight crime? Fight meta-villains? *Why?*). But she did want money, in abundance, and knew that petty theft wasn't the way to do it — she'd eventually be caught, probably by an experienced team of supers.

But what if she had her own team of supers? It might be that she could recruit people who had just discovered their powers, help them learn to control them, and convince them to join her! And when numerous, apparently unconnected, reports of teen supers surfaced in the campaign city, where Jensik had a major plant, she grew suspicious.

She traveled to the campaign city and built herself a videogames arcade business — a place where her young recruits would not stand out, and where they might feel at home. She designed herself a colorful super-costume, something to impress the kids she wanted to find. And she began looking . . .

Personality: Flare is a greedy and driven woman — but she's not conscienceless. As she's begun finding super-teens, training them, and helping them with their problems, she's begun to care for them and to have pangs of conscience about her mercenary goals.



She's not going to give up on her plans anytime soon; she's stubborn, and believes that she's a better guardian for the kids than their parents or foster-parents. But she's no longer advancing her plans with a crystal-clean conscience.

Campaign Role: Flare can crop up again in a campaign in a number of methods. As is detailed on pp. 18-19, much will depend on the actions of the PCs. She could turn out to be a hero-for-hire, possibly working through Supertemps (see sidebar, p. SU101), or pursue an acting career — there's always a spot in Hollywood for a good-looking woman who can fly!

If she is incarcerated or branded a criminal, the characters *will* hear from her again — she will reassemble a villain team, or join a preexisting one, and begin plotting to get back at the supers who "turned her in." This would provide an excellent opportunity for the GM to hit the players with a surprise months (or even years) after this adventure has concluded.

Battle Tactics: Flare prefers to fly around the edges of the fight, blasting ground troops. If the enemy has aerial units or flying supers, she'll engage them first, always preferring to fight from a distance with her energy-projection abilities.

Typical Dialogue: "Go ahead, hit me (blast me, shoot me). Whatever you do — *I've had worse.*"

Psi-Blast

Male human, white, age 17, 5' 9", 145 lbs., blonde hair, brown eyes, slight case of acne.

Costume: Dark blue armored bodysuit and mask (hair, eyes, mouth open). Light blue boots, gloves and belt. Blue-rimmed dark-lensed goggles (worn over eyeglasses). Yellow starburst pattern on chest and forehead.

ST 9, DX 13, IQ 14, HT 12.

Advantages: none.

Disadvantages: Bad Sight (nearsighted, wears glasses); Enemy (Police, on 6 or less); Enemy (Hell-Raisers, on 9 or less); Pacifism (Cannot kill); Secret Identity.

Powers: ESP Power 20 (single skill); Telepathy Power 15.

Super Skills: Mental Blow-14; Mind Shield-14; Psychometry-12; Psi Sense-15; Signature Sniffer-16; Telescan-18; Telesend-14; Telereceive-14.

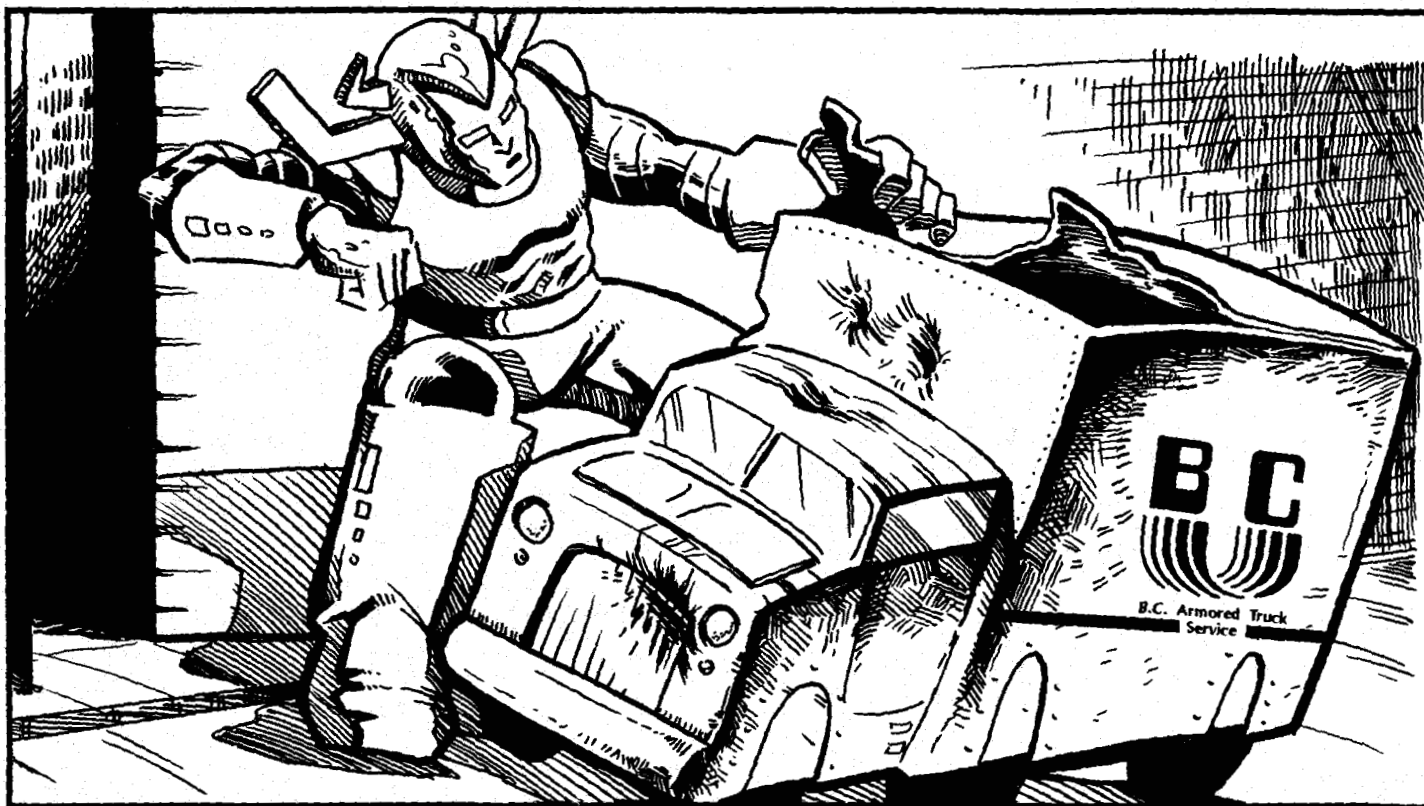
Equipment: Heavy Kevlar armor (PD 2, DR 12).

Story: Rick Tarrel has lived in the campaign city all his life. Exposed for years to Cell 13's chemicals, he gradually developed psionic powers similar to Scanner's. He became aware of his powers when he began losing his friends (he could always tell what they really thought of him, when they were lying to him, etc., and their friendships suffered) and when his already-high grades soared to near-perfect (because he always knew what the instructor knew).

A clever young man, he decided to turn his abilities to money-making. He started by getting his family onto a game show. His answers were always correct, and during these weeks on the show he and his family racked up a considerable amount in cash and prizes. He entered other thinking competitions and won most of them, becoming locally famous as a "whiz kid."

About a year ago, shortly after she came to the campaign city, Flare became aware of Tarrel's reputation and played a hunch. She confronted him, spelling out what she'd guessed about his abilities — as though she were already sure of it. He confessed . . . and she told him *her* own plans. Struck by the idea, and infatuated with Flare, he agreed to join her and became the first member of the Forty Thieves.

In the time since, Flare has shown Rick who's who in local crime and what to search for in their minds — location, cash transactions, and so forth. Flare has also acquired Rick an ar-



mored costume and pocket 2-way radio (a habit she has continued with most subsequent additions to the team), and he has been instrumental in finding more teen supers for the Forty Thieves.

Personality: Rick is an unsure young man lacking direction. He'd like to be considered a hero, but the idea of going head-to-head with villains worries him. Also, his current money-making schemes, even though they involve stealing from criminals, throw a shadow on his heroic ambitions. He has a serious crush on Flare, but is too unsure of himself to do anything about it. He's become fast friends with Metal and Coldsnap.

Campaign Role: In the adventure, Psi-Blast is a conscientious young man unhappily caught between Flare's ambition and the player-characters' more heroic goals. Given time, the PCs could convince him that the legal path is the correct one.

Battle Tactics: In combat, Psi-Blast tries to read the minds of enemy supers in order to keep his allies a step ahead of them; he also mentally blasts otherwise hard-to-hit opponents.

Typical Dialogue: Rick isn't much of a showman, and doesn't go in for grandiose statements.

Titan

Male human, white, age 17, 5' 6", 130 lbs., brown hair, brown eyes.

Costume: Titan's "costume" is actually the Titan Power Armor, a 12' robot suit.

ST 8, DX 12, IQ 17, HT 10.

Wealth: Filthy Rich.

Advantages: Eidetic Memory (1 level), Gadgeteer, Mathematical Ability.

Disadvantages: Major Delusion (He's the smartest person on the earth); Enemy (Police, on 6 or less), Enemy (Hell-Raisers, on 9 or less), Overconfidence.

Skills: Chemistry-17; Computer Operation-17; Computer Programming-17; Driving (Car)-14; Electronics-17; Engineer (Mechanical)-19; Mathematics-20.

Power Suit: (based on a PD 4, DR 15 set of light body armor).

Advantages: Damage Resistance (25 levels); Enhanced ST 120; Flight; Super Flight (1 level).

Powers: Generic Crushing Attack Power 14.

Super Skills: 7d+7 Energy Blast-16.

The suit is breakable (with DR 25, HP 200), but is targeted at -4 in combat. It is also slightly unreliable (roll a 13 or less to activate any ability). It isn't unique — Titan can build more of them any time he wishes.

Story: Andrew Peach is another victim of the Cell 13 toxic-waste dumping. The toxins boosted Andrew's intelligence to metahuman levels, causing him to grow up with an incalculable IQ and the ability to assimilate scientific data at an incredible rate. He also gained an ever-increasing contempt for his less-intelligent peers and family members. His bad attitude and utter disinterest in nonscientific subjects kept him in high school long after he could have made the jump to college.

At age 12, Andrew built his first motorized mini-car. At 14, his Mark III version could do 110 mph, and the engine he'd designed for it was so small and fuel-efficient that an oil company bought its design outright for an astronomical sum . . . in order to suppress it! Andrew had long tyrannized his family, and when he received the oil company money he persuaded his parents to retire and move away to spend their lives in more congenial surroundings — he'd fly them in only for important tasks, such as signing legal papers until he was of age. They readily agreed, leaving him alone in the family home to pursue his experiments as he pleased.

A year ago, Andrew finished development on a working model of his Titan robot-suit. The power armor stood 12' high, and was capable of flight and invisibility. He knew he could sell it for a huge sum — but why let people of pitiful intelligence profit from his inventions? He'd put the Titan suit to use himself. And so he began a crime spree, knocking over armored cars while invisible.

This series of mystery thefts soon came to the attention of Flare, who began plotting the movements of armored cars in the city. She caught Titan/Andrew in the act of robbery and flew off with him, inviting him into the Forty Thieves.

Andrew agreed for two reasons. First, he was frustrated at his inability to perform crimes any more original or profitable than armored-car robberies; he was still a novice in the ways of crime, and assumed he could learn a lot from Flare. Second, he knew that with his vast intelligence he could take over the Forty Thieves any time he decided that Flare was no longer useful.

Personality: Andrew Peach is an obnoxious, self-centered sociopath. He is disgusted with all humanity, which he perceives as being an order of evolution below him. Yet if he *were* to meet someone on his intellectual level, he'd be terrified at the competition. Psi-Blast knows that Titan is just waiting to overthrow Flare, so he despises Titan; Titan knows Psi-Blast hates him, but not why.

Campaign Role: Titan is the Forty Thieves' techno-wizard. He is also a weak link in their organization and could easily fall prey to the seductive persuasive abilities of The Denier, turning on the Forty Thieves.

Battle Tactics: Titan will either hang back, blasting, or will go into flight mode and crash through the enemy line like a flying juggernaut. For all his vaunted intelligence, he's actually very inexperienced in super-combat, and likely to make serious tactical errors.

Typical Dialogue: "Oh, the direct approach — " (or whatever tactic his enemy is using against him) — "I wouldn't have thought that even *you* would be that obvious."

Metal

Male human, black, age 16, 5' 9", 160 lbs., brown hair, silver eyes (contact lenses simulate original brown color in Secret ID).

Costume: Coal-black, stylishly articulated armor over entire body (clear, goggles-sized plate of armored glass in helmet over eyes, clearly shows fiery silver pupils); white belt, white crossed-broadswords symbol on chest.

ST 13, DX 13, IQ 11, HT 12.

Advantages: Acute Hearing (10 levels); Appearance (Hand-some); Broadcast (5 levels, enhancement: can act like a natural "loudspeaker" — can be heard clearly within 50 hexes).

Disadvantages: Enemy (Police, on 6 or less); Enemy (Hell-Raisers, on 9 or less).

Skills: Brawling-16; Driving (Car)-13; Sports (Football)-16; Sports (Basketball)-14.

Powers: Generic Cutting Power 10; Matter Control Power 10 (single skill); Sonic Power 10 (single skill).

Super Skills: Disintegrate (limitation: only works on metal)-14; 5d+5 Sonic Blast (enhancement: Area Affect)-14; 5d Sonic Sword (based on Generic Cutting Power, limitation: Range of 1 hex)-11.

Equipment: Heavy Kevlar armor (PD 2, DR 15).

Story: Evan "Thirteen" Miller is a budding musician and sports hero. As lead guitarist of the garage band Rad Knights, he's been playing local clubs and picking up a small, devoted following. Better-known are his sports successes. Last year, at age 15, in his sophomore year in high school, he was made second-string quarterback (wearing number 13) of the Knox HS varsity team. Late in the year, the first-string QB was injured and Evan finished the season for him, leading the team into the playoffs and the regional 5A title. He was a sure bet to become first-string QB, and to lead his team to better than the regional championships this year.

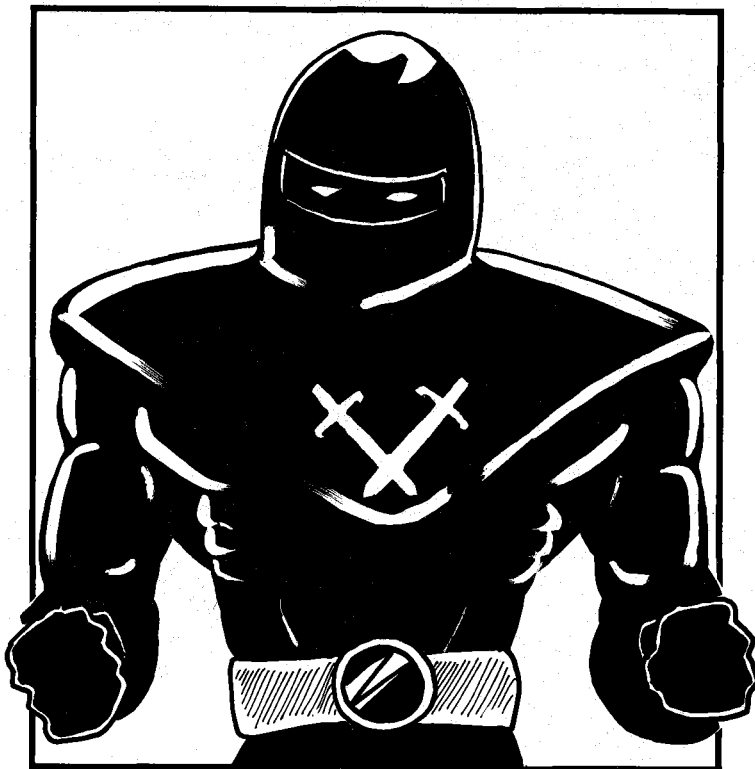
Then, early in summer vacation, his powers began to surface. He began hearing what he thought were radio broadcasts. Electronic equipment inexplicably began to burn out when he touched it, and his family came to the conclusion that he was wrecking household TVs, VCRs, and other equipment deliberately. He was placed in therapy, but his therapist grew increasingly frustrated at his inability to "get at the root of Evan's hostility." He told the Millers that Evan had deep-seated problems and was maliciously refusing to cooperate in his therapy. The accidents around the house continued. Evan's relationship with his family worsened — shouting matches erupted between him and his father.

Finally, on one night when his parents were visiting friends, his powers came to fruition. His pupils became weird and inhuman, flickering with silver fiery energy. The energy emerging from his body set fire to his living room and burned out every circuit in the house. In a fit of depression over his freakish state and what he was sure would be rejection and punishment from his parents, he ran away from home.

He lived on the streets for several weeks, concealing his eyes behind sunglasses, living off handouts and the generosity of friends. The town rumor mill was hard at work — word got back to his parents that Evan was now some sort of dope peddler, hiding the signs of his own addiction behind shades.

Occasionally, his powers would spontaneously manifest, throwing sonic energies in all directions. In one instance, they went off while he was passing a bank, setting off the bank's security systems. Guards got a good look at him, and within minutes police were chasing him. Meanwhile, Titan heard the police crosstalk on his radio scanner and alerted Flare. She guessed that a new super might be involved and took Titan and Psi-Blast out to find the source of the commotion.

With their combined abilities, they rescued Evan just as he was chased into a dead-end alley by his pursuers. Desperate for help, Evan decided to join the Forty Thieves. Flare helped him learn to control his power. She acquired tinted contact lenses for him, successfully covering up the peculiar changes to his pupils. And she got him back together with his parents. Although they



still believed all the stories about Evan's drug-dealing and mental problems, they fervently wanted him back home.

They put him into a drug rehab clinic and more therapy, which he stoically endured. The clinic confirmed that he had no sign of drugs in his blood and no apparent chemical addiction. Though he wouldn't discuss his time away from home, his new therapist indicated that he had some adjustment problems but was neither violent nor dangerous. So when school began again, he entered his junior year as others had predicted. He was still varsity QB, still the team hero, still on his way toward a brilliant sports career, but he had a very strange reputation, wouldn't discuss the eight weeks he was missing from home, and would neither admit to or deny the rumors about him. Whispers circulated behind his back, and many of his old friends stayed clear of him. He'd become an outcast in his own community.

Personality: Evan continues to train with the Forty Thieves. He's torn between his desire to make good for himself in music and sports on the one hand, and the betrayal he's felt from his family and friends on the other. He'd like to use his powers to be a heroic super, crushing enemy teams in the NFL by day and villains by night, providing an example to disaffected youths. But other factors have kept him allied with Flare. First, he recognizes that he has an obligation to her for helping him. Second, he feels keen resentment at his ex-friends for all the malicious stories they'd spread about him. Third, he, Psi-Blast and Coldsnap have become fast friends, their uncritical acceptance being very important to him.

Campaign Role: Metal is a budding hero. A sympathetic super could turn him around and set him to trying to turn *Flare* around. He's a natural leader, and is the second lieutenant of the Forty Thieves, after Psi-Blast.

Battle Tactics: In combat, Metal likes to punch it out with enemies — but takes an intelligent approach to it. He'll use the surroundings to dump heavy things on his enemies' heads, go after metal-armored enemies and destroy their armor. He's fond of knightly motifs, so he also likes to use his Sonic Sword and go after enemies in one-on-one combat.

Typical Dialogue: When going into combat, Metal tunes in to rock music stations and broadcasts the music out loud while he's fighting. An avid rock fan, he sometimes accompanies his music on an imaginary guitar, and his quips in combat are usually music-oriented: "Let's Rock and Roll!" and "Let's try some percussion — and *you're* the drums!"

Coldsnap

Female human, white, age 16, 5'5", 120 lbs., white hair (brown in secret identity); white eyes (blue in secret identity). In her Coldsnap identity, her skin radiates cold and is icy white.

Costume: Maren wears a light blue thigh-length tunic with flaring sleeves and light blue swash-topped boots; dark blue leggings, belt, gloves, and a blindfold-style mask. When not transformed, she has taken to wearing white jeans and shirts.

ST 9 (125 when transformed), DX 14, IQ 12, HT 14.

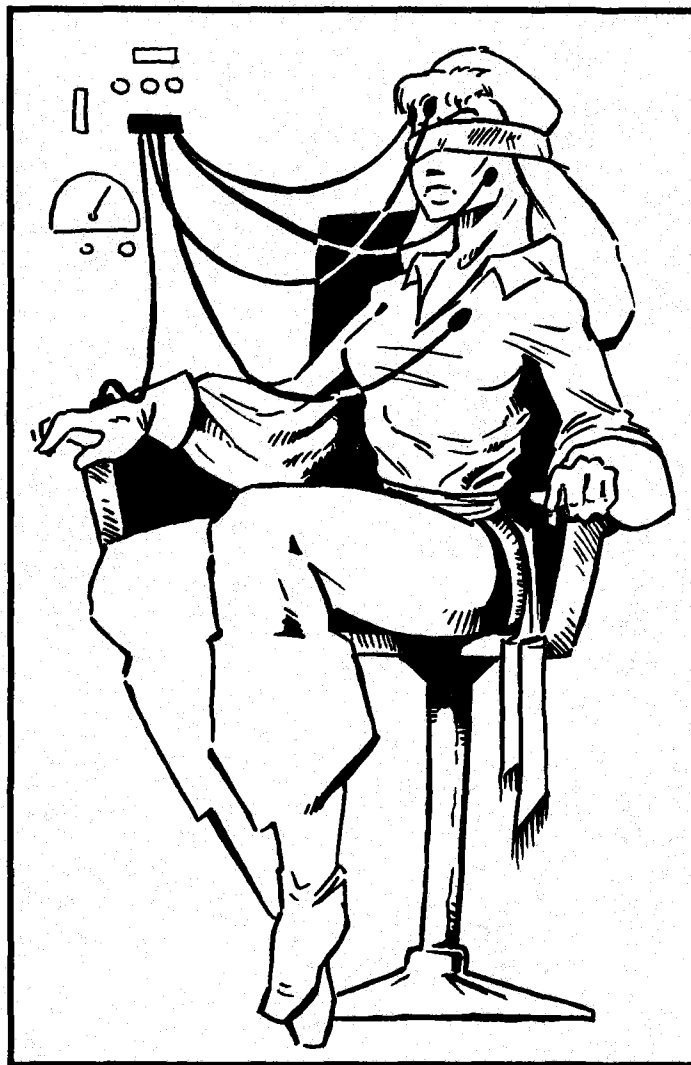
Advantages: Appearance (Beautiful); Body of Ice (1 level, enhancement: Switchable); Damage Resistance (40 levels); Ice Skates.

Disadvantages: Enemy (Police, 9 or less); Enemy (Hell-Raisers, on 12 or less); Uncontrollable Change.

Powers: Cold Power 12 (single skill).

Super Skills: 6d+6 Frost Jet-14; 6d+6 Frost Jet (enhancement: Always On, limitation: Touch Only).

Story: Long exposure to the Jensik toxins in drinking water mutated young Maren McCrae in a bizarre fashion. When she



grows alarmed or frightened, or when her heartbeat achieves a certain high rate, mutated centers of her brain trigger system-wide changes in her body.

In a flash, all heat is expelled from her, plunging her body to subzero temperatures. Psionic force fields saturate her, keeping her from freezing solid and allowing her to move normally; the fields also provide substantial protection from harm. Her skin, hair and eyes become icy white and absorb heat so fast that it is harmful for ordinary people to touch her skin. Once she is in this ice-maiden form, she can stay this way as long as she wishes, or she can change back to normal whenever she is relatively calm.

This change first occurred a few days before her 16th birthday, when she was jogging. She decided to sprint the last stretch home, and suddenly found herself changing into her icy form, which terrified her. She fainted, and when she awoke she was normal, convinced that the event had been a hallucination.

At her birthday party, while she was kissing her boyfriend, she changed again, doing serious frostbite damage to his face and hands and driving all the guests shrieking out into the street. Her parents, rabid fundamentalists, were incapable of coping with the situation and decided that she must be some sort of demon-possessed freak. They made no objections when the police took her into custody.

The story was front-page news, and Flare kept on top of it. Maren spent two days in her cold-form this time, days in which she received unsympathetic interrogation from city and state authorities, days in which her family refused to speak with her.

She reverted to human on the third day; that same day, she learned that Jensik Medical Institute had kindly offered to give the most intensive battery of tests available in order to determine the cause of her condition.

On the fourth day, Maren's parents gave Jensik permission . . . and Flare broke Maren out of custody. Flare and the Forty Thieves gave Maren what she most needed at that point — willing ears, no contempt or fear, and the hope that she might learn to control her powers. She, Metal and Psi-Blast became close friends; but Maren, unhappily, can have nothing *more* than a close friendship until she can learn to keep from transforming inadvertently.

Since being rescued, Maren has stayed with Flare. Her identity is known to the public, and the authorities and Jensik are looking for her.

Personality: Before her first transformation, Maren was a bright, chatty, naive honors student without a worry in the world. Now, she's grown more disillusioned with the world and has begun serious reevaluation of her beliefs.

She's also developed quite a crush on Metal, but she refuses to admit it to anyone, including herself, while she is incapable of physical affection with *any* man. She's known for her shy, sad demeanor most of the time. She really throws herself into combat, though, a way of externalizing all her aggressions.

Campaign Role: Coldsnap is an unhappy young woman who needs the acceptance and affection her parents will no longer give her. She also needs medical aid to help her learn how to keep from spontaneously activating her powers. An offer of professional medical help from a known super-team (or villain group, even!) would be an overwhelming draw for her.

Battle Tactics: In combat, Coldsnap throws herself into the thick of things, using both her cold powers and great strength. She responds well to combat guidance from Flare and Psi-Blast. She has a lot of aggression to vent and so may continue beating an enemy after he's down.

Typical Dialogue: "You think *that's* something? This'll chill you to the bone!"

Dreamer

Female human, Hispanic, age 14, 4'11", 100 lbs., brown hair, green eyes, fair skin.

Costume: Dreamer's costume is mostly a punkish rock-star getup: Black leather boots, pants, jacket (worn over any T-shirt featuring a popular band), wristbands, and gloves, all dripping with shiny silver zippers, chains, studs and buttons. She also wears a close-fitting full-coverage helmet that looks like a pure-white woman's face . . . except that the left half is serene, the left eye apparently closed (Dreamer can see through a small slit), while the right half is twisted in glee and merriment, and decorated in bizarre colors and patterns. (When among people whom she knows, but who don't know her secret identity, she removes the helmet and wears a small blue domino mask.)

ST 10, DX 14, IQ 17, HT 12.

Advantages: Appearance (Beautiful); Increased Speed (3 levels).

Disadvantages: Enemy (Police, on 6 or less); Enemy (Hell-Raisers, on 9 or less); Secret Identity.

Skills: Biology-15; Chemistry-14; Physiology-15; First Aid-17; Running-18; Sex Appeal-13; Swimming-13.

Powers: Matter Control Power 18 (single skill); Telepathy Power 8.

Super Skills: Alter-20; Telereceive-14; Telesend-13.

Equipment: Heavy Kevlar Body Armor (PD 2, DR 15).

Story: Linda Guerrero, a Knox High School track-and-field athlete with average grades, average problems, and average ambitions, discovered her toxin-induced powers just by wishing. One day, while fretting about not being able to afford to go to an upcoming concert, she fervently wished that she had enough money for that and several other things — and was amazed to see her spiral notebook transform into a stack of crisp \$20 bills.

Astonished, she went on a wishing spree, changing grubby old clothes into stylish and expensive new ones, wishing away all the creaks and groans of her house, etc.

Through experimentation, she discovered that she had the power to change the atomic structure of objects so that they turn into other things. She also discovered that she was thinking more clearly than ever before — and even seeing things hidden in other people's minds!

One of the people whose mind she read was Flare (in her secret identity as owner of Sultan's Palace), where she discovered what Flare knew about Jensik. So instead of Flare tracking her down, it was Linda who marched into the Sultan's Palace, confronted Psi-Blast, and told him that she knew all about his powers and those of the others and wanted to speak to their leader at once. She got her audience, told her story, and let Flare tell *her* story.

She didn't care one way or the other about the Forty Thieves' criminal plans. But she knew it was a good idea to associate with some more experienced supers so that she might be better trained herself. And she'd be able to work with Flare in learning more about Jensik and closing down Cell 13.

So she joined the Forty Thieves, while continuing her ordinary life at Knox High School and at home. Her study habits and grades improved dramatically, her new interest in a medical career delighted her parents, and it became increasingly likely that she'd win one or more academic scholarships.

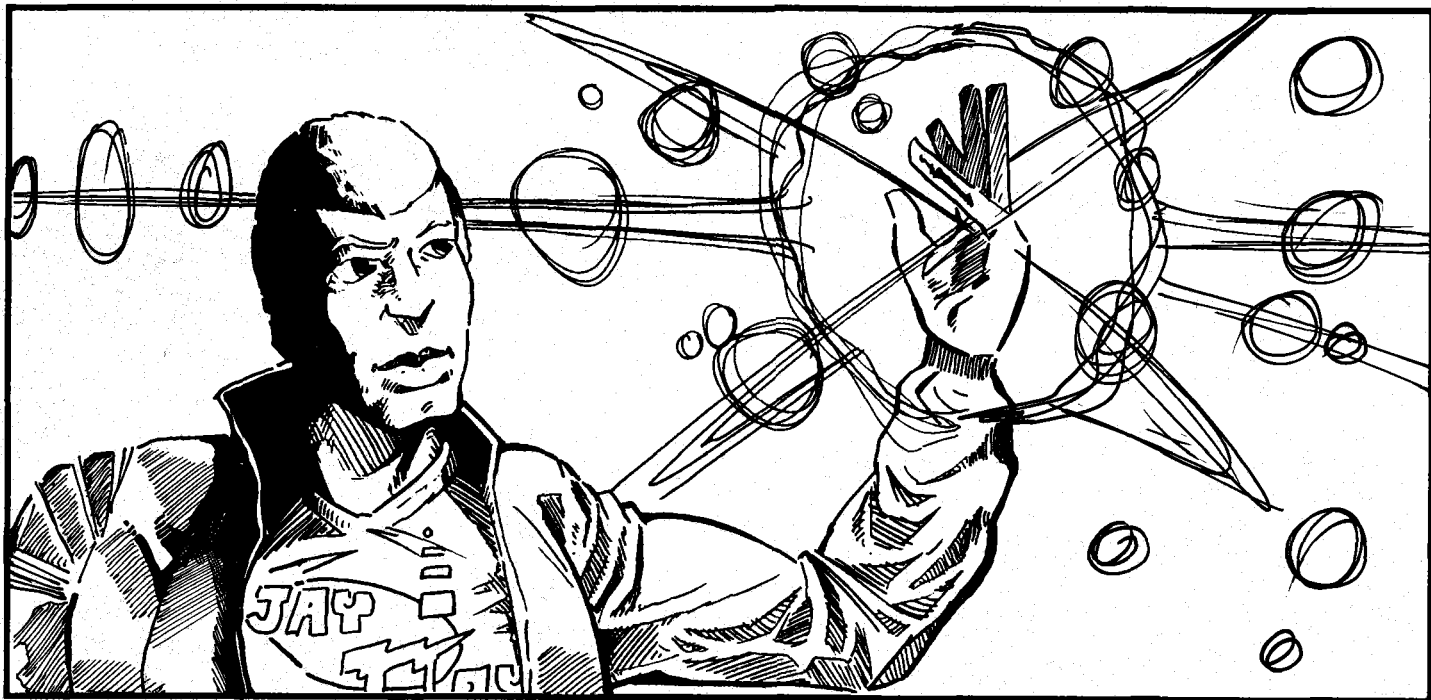
Personality: Linda is now a very strange girl, almost a case of multiple personalities. On the one hand, she has the normal interests of a healthy 14-year-old girl: Socializing, parties, boys, school events, daydreams of the future. On the other hand, the development of her powers changed her considerably. She has a genius-level IQ (she doesn't let Titan suspect that it's on a par with his), a championship athlete's discipline, and a very unadolescent and keenly-developed sense of vengeance.

Boys find her intimidating. She's unwilling to accept busy-work or sloppy half-answers from her teachers, who find her infuriating (but brilliant). Her old friends are confused and put off by the changes in her personality. Her track and field coach is thrilled by her new discipline and dedication to the sport. Though she could, she doesn't just create money for herself or the Forty Thieves; in fact, she's never let on to them that she could. This decision is part caution and part ethics — she has a deep-down feeling that doing such a thing is just *wrong*.

Dreamer's personality has been altered radically, and is best characterized by her cold-blooded approach and schizophrenic reactions to different situations. She might recommend the most cruelly efficient solution to a problem and then revert to her 14-year-old personality, retracting that recommendation and offering something more humane, although less pragmatic.

Campaign Role: Dreamer is a real problem for Flare and the PCs in the adventure. She skips around from maturity to immaturity at the blink of an eye. She's brilliant, but inexperienced. She could easily be swayed to the PCs' philosophies, or to The Denier's.

Battle Tactics: Dreamer tends to use her transformation abilities on enemy gadgets or weapons, turning them into inoffensive and stupid objects at critical points in the combat. She's



usually cool and calculating, but can become vengeful or youthfully squeamish and sentimental, also at critical moments.

Typical Dialogue: "If I can't change your mind, I'll just have to change your — (insert name of villain's weapon, just before she transforms it into a tomato or foam-rubber ball)."

Plasma

Male human, black, age 15, 6'1", 170 lbs., brown hair, brown eyes, dark complexion.

Costume: None; he customarily wears blue jeans, T-shirts, tennis shoes, and windbreaker-style jackets.

ST 12, DX 12, IQ 11, HT 12.

Advantages: Damage Resistance (DR 50, limitation: only when powers are out of control).

Disadvantages: Combat Paralysis; Enemy (Police, on 12 or less).

Skills: Running-13.

Powers: Heat/Fire Power 40 (single skill).

Super Skills: 20d+20 Flame Jet (enhancements: Area Effect, Explosive Effect, and Continuing Damage; limitations: Uncontrollable and Limited Use — 4 per day, automatically goes off in 4 consecutive turns)-16.

Story: Jay-Ray Robinson was born in the campaign city 15 years ago, but his family moved when he was five. A year ago, while he was walking alone in a grassy field, his powers triggered for the first time. He "exploded," with powerful plasma energies blasting off him and setting fire to the field but doing no harm to him. He got away before anyone saw him; terrified, he told no one of the incident. Months later, it happened again. This time, he recognized the sensation as the chain reaction began, and was able to get clear of his house and into surrounding trees before he "blew up." Again, the result was a fire.

Terrified by these incidents, he was afraid he'd be labeled a "freak," or just plain liar, if he told anybody. He kept the explosions to himself, and just hoped that the events would eventually go away.

Soon, he found that this power was triggering at more and more frequent intervals. At this time, he also began reading newspaper reports of Maren McCrae's debut back in the city of

his birth; her story, so much like his, and the "coincidence" of it taking place in his home town convinced him that their circumstances were somehow related.

His parents soon came to the conclusion that his absences coincided too neatly with the depredations of the mystery arsonist who was doing so much damage to the nearby woods. They confronted and accused him. He denied their charges and explained what was really happening to him. They didn't believe him and threatened to alert the police if he didn't confess. Desperate to know why he was emitting these surges of energy, and not anxious to make his discoveries in county jail, Jay-Ray ran from home. He hitchhiked his way out of town, intending to reach Maren McCrae and find out from her how her powers had come about. What happened afterwards is discussed in the adventure section of this book.

Personality: Jay-Ray is an average young man in exceptional circumstances. His interests run to comic books, girls, sandlot baseball and music videos (not necessarily in that order) and he has no interest whatsoever in the world of heroic supers, metavillains and their clashes.

Jay-Ray feels extremely guilty about his power — he knows that he killed some people at the bus terminal, and is deathly afraid that someone else is going to get hurt if he doesn't learn how to control it. For this reason, he is extremely vulnerable to The Denier's promises about medical help — while he might not like the demonic super's style, he is willing to put up with it in exchange for help.

Campaign Role: Jay-Ray is a super in need of serious help. He's a walking time bomb and his powers are building up to critical mass. If the PCs exert any kind of serious effort to help him, he will gladly abandon Flare and the Forty Thieves — he isn't interested in committing crimes, he just wants to be normal again.

Battle Tactics: When forced into combat, Jay-Ray panics and sprays plasma destruction indiscriminately in all directions. He will try to keep from "exploding" if there are civilians around, but the excitement of battle will quickly overwhelm his meager control, and the destructive process will begin.

Typical Dialogue: "Hey, I just wanna be left alone."

THINGS TO SMASH

On the chart below is a convenient listing of typical damage resistance and hit points of various inanimate objects from the battle scenes. When running the combat, the GM should make sure that there are plenty of walls being smashed, objects being thrown, and other general mayhem. This will increase the players' enjoyment of the battles, and make them more "comic-y."

At the Warehouse:

<i>Object</i>	<i>DR</i>	<i>Hit Points</i>	<i>Weapon to Use</i>
Exterior Wall	4	20	Not impaling
Interior Wall	2	10	Any
Big Door	3	25	Not impaling
Small Door	3	15	Not impaling
Typical Crate	4	30	Not impaling
Police Car	10	75	Not impaling

At Knox High School:

<i>Object</i>	<i>DR</i>	<i>Hit Points</i>	<i>Weapon to Use</i>
Exterior Wall	6	60	Not impaling
Interior Wall	6	40	Not impaling
Exterior Door	7	40	Not impaling
Interior Door	4	20	Not impaling
Plexiglass Panel	1	5	Any
Drinking Fountains	12	20	Not impaling
Toilet	15	15	Any
School Bus	17	150	Any
Teacher's Desk	6	45	Not impaling
Student's Desk	3	10	Not impaling
Bookshelf	2	20	Any
Bank of Lockers	4	20	Not impaling
Filing Cabinet	4	20	Not impaling
Computer	2	5	Any
Typewriter	4	10	Any
Vending Machine	4	20	Not impaling
Cafeteria Table	4	20	Not impaling
Cafeteria Chair	1	5	Any

At The Sultan's Palace and Ridgecrest Mall:

<i>Object</i>	<i>DR</i>	<i>Hit Points</i>	<i>Weapon to Use</i>
Mall Exterior Wall	4	60	Not impaling
Mall Interior Wall	3	30	Not impaling
Mall Exterior Door	6	30	Not impaling
Mall Interior Door	4	20	Not impaling
Glass Display Window	3	1	Any
Video Game Machine	3	10	Any
Shop Display Case	1	5	Any
Large Furniture	3	15	Not impaling
Small Furniture	3	5	Any
Slab of Floor	4	30	Not impaling



NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK!

High school — a time for proms, football and homework. But at Knox High, it's also time for some of the students to try out their new super abilities! They're powerful, confused and misunderstood. They create destruction and chaos wherever they go. They're hunted by the authorities . . . and by dark powers.

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Written by Aaron Allston
Edited by Loyd Blankenship
Cover art by David Dorman
Interior art by Doug Shuler

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